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Billy Bowlegs;

The Half-Breed

SEMINOLE CHIEF.

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Earl Ford McNaughton

Earl Ford McNaughton

Billy Bowlegs.

CHAPTER I.

THE HALF-BREED CHIEF.

"**BELLOW!** thunder! crash! crash! Let forth your forked lightning! Oh, that I had a voice that could rival ye, or a tongue of fire like your own. Rage, tempest, for there is that within me which equals your fury. Roll, billows, for I love your anger."

A series of vivid lightning flashes illuminated the heavens almost as brightly as ever did the noonday sun, and the face and form of the speaker was thus revealed. He was a man of powerful frame, and evidently an Indian, for he wore the costume peculiar to the savage race. His face looked absolutely hideous in its war paint, and as he turned his eyes up towards the blazing sky, they shone almost as brightly as did the fiery surface of the heavens.

The form of the speaker was somewhat peculiar. He was "stoop-shouldered," which is something unusual for an Indian, and this was not the result of years, for the long hair which streamed from beneath his head-dress, was of a jetty blackness. And there was still another deformity. His legs were so bowed as almost to form a complete circle. From this fact, it might readily be inferred that this was no other than the daring and merciless Seminole chief, Billy Bowlegs. Such was really the case.

the water was, therefore, calm. But further out in the bay the waves were mild, and it did not seem possible that so tiny a craft could live in such a sea.

As Bowlegs saw this, he muttered:

"She has more determination than I gave her credit for. I can't really call it courage, for the fool don't know her danger; or else she has become desperate, believing that I am on her trail. I am nearer than she expects, and I will give her an agreeable surprise."

The chief put forth all his strength, but he gained only slowly upon the little canoe, which was managed with a master hand. It was evident that the very center of the bay would be reached before he could overtake the maiden, and her danger was really becoming great, for the little craft was tossed upon the billows as if it had been a mere top, although it kept on its course.

The chief had nearly reached the canoe, and again there came a vivid lightning's flash. The face and form of the maiden were plainly revealed. It seemed to be that of a white girl, and she was truly a lovely creature. But there was an expression of anxiety resting upon her countenance, if not of positive fear, as she turned her eyes up towards the settlement, and eagerly exclaimed:

"Oh, thou Great Spirit, help me to reach it, for I would save them. Let me not perish in these mad waters—save me."

By this time Bowlegs had laid one hand upon the stern of the canoe, and as he heard the words of the maiden, he burst into a mocking laugh.

Uttering a cry of terror, the poor girl leaped to her feet, dropped her paddle in the bottom of the canoe, and then sank back into her seat again, as if in utter despair. The savage could not enter the craft, for it was tiny in proportions, and scarcely able to bear more than the weight of a single person. And it required considerable effort on his part to keep it afloat, now that its occupant no longer used the oar. The chief saw this, and in a savage manner, he said:

"Matteo, take up that paddle."

The girl did so, and the craft at once became steady.

"Where are you going?" asked the chief.

"I was going to ——"

"To the settlement, and I suppose to the fort. Am I not right?"

"Yes—yes."

"What was your purpose?"

"To—to——"

"To see Henry Judson, I suppose."

"Yes—yes."

"No other purpose?"

"No—I——"

"Don't lie to me, Matteo. I know your intentions. Now tell me all, and tell me the truth. Speak—and quickly."

"I cannot bear the sight of human blood. It makes me sick."

"Indeed?"

"Yes—and I feel that the Great Spirit frowns upon cruel deeds, and if I approve them I am equally guilty."

"You mean that you are equally guilty if you do not do all you can to prevent bloodshed?"

"Yes, that is what I do mean."

"Matteo, you were once the pride of my tribe. I hoped to see you the wife of one of my young braves, but you met that paleface officer, and he has made you a traitress. You not only made up your mind to forsake us, and our house in the Everglades, but you had determined to betray us. You had resolved to tell your lover, or the commander of the fort, that Billy Bowlegs, the chief of the Seminoles, and his warriors, were soon to attack and exterminate the accursed invaders. Tell me, am I not right?"

"You are."

"And what punishment do you expect for this treachery?"

"Death, if I am taken."

"Taken!" repeated the savage, in a tone of surprise, and repeating it, he burst into another wild laugh. Then he continued:

"Taken, did you say? I think you are already taken. I look around upon the waters, and I really don't see anyone at hand to rescue you. I wouldn't mind grappling with half-a-dozen, especially if your lover, young Henry Judson, was among them. But he will be in my power in a few days, and I will find for him a death much more terrible than being buried beneath these dark waves. Now, use your oar to some purpose, and land at the mouth of that river again."

It was a great mistake of the chief, when he spoke to Matteo of murdering her lover. Naturally, she was a creature of but little will of her own, or so she had always been looked upon, but her eyes now flashed, and she half rose in her seat, while she fixed her gaze upon the savage, who still remained in the water, sustaining himself by clinging to the canoe. He had told her to use her oar to some purpose, and it seems she had resolved to do it, for she raised it above her head, and struck with all her strength. Had Bowlegs dreamed of such a thing, he could easily have avoided the blow, for he saw the movement in time. But surprise rendered him absolutely motionless, and down came the paddle crashing upon his skull. He uttered a howl of pain, released his hold upon the canoe, and sank into the water.

Matteo was actually surprised at her own act. But excitement gave her additional strength, and she now began to propel her craft towards the fort at a rapid rate. It bounded forward over the billows like a thing of life. The most dangerous portion of the bay was safely passed, and she was within a few yards of the land. She believed herself safe. She had even ceased to put forth any very great exertion, for she did not doubt but the Indian had found a watery grave. She even found herself regretting the action she had been forced to take, when, by the aid of the lightning's glow, she saw a head above the water.

There were the fiery eyes of Bowlegs, and they were glaring vengeance upon her. She heard low cursings as they broke from his lips, and she felt as if the blood in her veins was turning to ice, while her heart appeared suddenly to cease its beatings. But this weakness was only momentary.

A few vigorous strokes of the oar brought her to the land, and leaping upon it, she ran with all her speed towards the fort.

She dared not turn to ascertain whether or not she was still followed. She felt sure that she would be, and this was rendered doubly certain, when she heard the heavy footfall of her enemy, as it seemed but a few yards behind her. Partly from terror, and partly from the hope of attracting attention and receiving timely aid, she began to utter piercing shrieks and calls for help.

The garrison at the fort were aroused by these cries, and an evident commotion was soon visible. Lights flashed, voices were heard, and answering shouts came to the flying maiden. She had almost reached the main entrance to the stronghold, but she felt that she was lost, for Bowlegs was close upon her. She fancied that she would feel his hot breath, and she expected every instant to find herself in his clutch.

Nerved to desperation, however, she turned suddenly aside, and the savage passed her. But he instantly checked himself, and confronting her again, he felt that he was now certain of his victim.

When Matteo left her canoe, she had retained the paddle, and now held it in her hand. She had used it to some purpose, for defense, but a short time before, and she determined to try it once more.

As the savage approached her, she raised the weapon and dealt a powerful blow. The chief reeled under the stroke, but he had anticipated it this time, and the only decided result was to increase his rage. Fiercely burst the curses from his lips, and with more than woman's strength did the brave girl bat e for her life. But the contest was

too unequal to last, and she was even in the grasp of the savage.

In the meantime a number of soldiers had issued from the fort, and by the aid of the lightning they saw the Indian and the maiden. That others were near, they readily believed, and one of the men raising his piece, fired. The shot struck the shoulder of Bowlegs, cutting a slight gash. He relaxed his hold upon Matteo, and taking advantage of this, she darted in the direction of the settlement, the nearest dwelling of which was not many yards distant.

Soon as the savage saw this, he started in pursuit again. But his own position was a critical one. The troops of the fort were thoroughly aroused, and they were following at a double quick.

The settlers were also up in arms. They had long anticipated trouble, and had kept themselves ready for action at any moment. Now they heard the shrieks of Matteo, and by the occasional flash of light they saw the outlines of her form and that of a single savage in pursuit. It was not easy to explain the meaning of this, and the settlers were still further puzzled when they saw the maiden dash into the door of a dwelling, followed by the savage. The very boldness of the act confounded them, and this the wily chief knew would be the case.

"Save me! save me!" cried Matteo, as she fell exhausted upon the floor of the cabin she had entered. But in an instant she was lifted in the powerful arms of the Indian, who threw her over his shoulder as easily as if she had been a mere child.

Drawing a huge knife, he turned and gazed out upon the gathering crowd for an instant, and then sprang forth among them. He struck furiously on each side with his weapon, and succeeded in opening a passage, through which he darted towards the river.

Again the voice of Matteo rang out:

"Save me! save me!"

By this time the settlers seemed somewhat to have recovered their surprise, and one of them exclaimed:

"By heavens! that's Bowlegs!"

"And that's a captive?" echoed another.

"Shoot him down!" was the general cry.

"Be careful, or you'll kill her!" exclaimed another.

This was enough. It was too dark to be *sure* of an aim, and instantly the crowd started in pursuit. Two of the fleetest overtook the savage just as he reached the water's edge, and they caught the girl, while they raised their knives to strike.

For an instant Bowlegs appeared inclined to give them battle. He turned upon them with a fierce howl, but when he saw the numbers he would instantly have to encounter, he relaxed his hold upon the maiden, and turned, dove beneath the waters, disappearing from view.

A dozen shots were fired after him, and then the party awaited his reappearance. But the thunder-shower was passing away, and the lightnings flashes were less frequent and vivid, so that he was not discovered.

It was not long after that a mocking laugh and a defiant expression came back from the opposite side of the river. The voice was at once recognized—Billy Bowlegs still lived.

BILLY BOWLEGS.

CHAPTER II.

MATTEO IN THE FOLT.

No sooner had it become known among the settlers that Bowlegs had been among them, and escaped, than there was the most intense excitement. What could it mean? Why would the chief venture there alone? The settlers nearly all knew him by sight, and very few there were who had not suffered at his hands. Hundreds had sworn to shoot him at sight, and many of the most daring had hunted him night and day, thinking in all honesty if they could kill the monster, they and their families would be permitted to live in peace.

Bowlegs was aware of this personal hatred for himself, and although far from being a coward, he had taken good care to avoid the avengers, whom he well knew were upon his trail.

Once he had been hunted far into the Everglades. Twice a bullet had cut his brow, once leaving him insensible for an hour; and the result was that he had become extremely cautious. Several times he had sent his warriors to attack some point he supposed to be weak, but he had not, as formerly, led the attack, placing himself in the van, and cheering his warriors by tones which rang above the din of battle.

These facts were known. It was also believed that it was the intention of the Seminole chief to attack the settle-

ment, and Chockinicklee in a short time. So the question arose:

"Why did he come alone to-night? Or, rather, why did he come with an Indian maiden, who appeared to be his captive?"

This was a question which could not readily be answered. Some of the older settlers collected in a groupe, and began the discussion of the subject. Tom Bruce seemed to be the leading spirit, and after a few moments of thought, expressed himself as follows:

"Boys, we're pestered a' heap by those pesky skunks, darn 'em. Don't you all say, root 'em out or die? That's my religion, and dash my buttons if I care who knows it. Here's a knife, and here's a shootin' iron as seldom fails, 'cept when its mighty dark. Am I right?"

"In course ye is, Tom," was the general response.

The leader drew himself up to his full height, and continued:

"We don't like to make war upon women; not much, for we're Ingin fighters, and nothin' shorter, 'cept it be tigers, bars, snakes and skunks. The latter animals we don't like to tackle, but when wust comes to wust, we're gwine to do it."

"Good for Tom," was the general response; and that worthy continued:

"The first named varmints we can settle in a juffy. But when it comes to the latter critter, we don't just know how to act. We've got just such a case now. Don't you see it, boys?"

"No; tell us—tell us," was the general cry.

"Yes, I'll tell ye. Listen, now, and hold your breath. You've all seen Billy Bowlegs to-night?"

"Yes, yea."

"You saw he come alone?"

"Yes, yea."

"No, he din't; not by a tarnel sight!"

"Who was with him?"

"Who was with him? That is a great question for you to be askin'. Didn't you see who come with him?"

"Nobody but the gal."

"That you've hit it, and yet I don't think you understand. You're as green as squashes. Tarnal snakes, but I should think you were born in New York, or some other outlandish place, where folks don't know nothing, instead of being raised here in Florida. You don't know what's up?"

"No; tell us."

"I will. That pesky devil, Bowlegs, came to this settlement, and what do you suppose it was for?"

"We don't know."

"Then ye're blarsted fools."

"Don't speak in that way about us."

"S'pose I can prove you are so?"

"Then we will stand it. Go ahead."

"I will. That Ingin didn't come here for nothin', and he didn't come alone, that you all know. What did he come here for? Why, as a spy, of course. Didn't he want help? Of course he did. And wantin' it, how could he manage better than to bring a gal with him, and pretend that she was his captive. Of course she was instructed to yell and kick like thunder, and so excite our sympathies. Now that she is, lookin' as scar'd as a sheep, and as meek as a six weeks' lamb. But, I tell you, she's a spy. She's a helpin' that crooked-legged cuss, and by to-morrow or next day, he'll be down on us with his whole pack like a flee upon a possum, and we'll be gobble! up in a heap, and roasted *sure*."

"What shall be done?"

"What will be done? I'll tell you. Hang her by the neck, an' that'll end these fixins."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes; I *know* all about it."

"Then hang her, hang her!" was the universal cry.

Poor Matteo, was utterly terror stricken, and as a rush was made towards her by several of the men, she crouched

low and trembled, while she extended her hands imploringly, but did not speak. Her manner would have excited sympathy in almost any human breast, but those rude men appeared to experience no such emotion. The maiden was rudely seized, and dragged to a spot near the river's bank, where grew a large tree.

While some of the men were making preparations for the hanging, others busied themselves in building a fire, so that the scene might be well lighted up.

Even the women of the settlement began to assemble, and they appeared to be more blood-thirsty if possible than the men. They were bitter in their reproaches, and some of them were loud in curses against the supposed spy. True, they had some shadow of excuse, for many among the number had been robbed of a child, or some other relative by the merciless redskins. Now they fully believed that Matteo had come among them for the purpose of getting all the information possible in order to enable the savages to make a successful attack, and a general slaughter.

The poor maiden watched the proceedings with a vacant expression, as if she did not fully comprehend them. Conscious of her innocence, she could scarcely believe that she was about to suffer death, for a crime she had never committed. She had never looked upon the palefaces as the cruel monsters they had been represented to her by the Seminoles, and since she had met and become partially acquainted with some of them, she had formed a high estimate with regard to their general character and kindness.

Every thing in readiness, Tom Bruce stepped forward as the leader, and exclaimed:

"Before we string her up, she's got to confess all she knows about the intentions and movements of Bowlegs and his red devils."

"Yes—make her confess," was the general response.

"Get up," continued Bruce, giving her a violent jerk by the arm.

Slowly did Matteo arise to her feet, but she had not strength to stand, and fell again upon the earth.

"I'll fix this matter," said Bruce, and as he spoke, he placed the noose around her neck. A wild shriek burst from her lips, and in the agony of despair, she clutched the rope, and cried:

"Oh! what would you do

"Hang you, of course," returned Bruce.

"What have I done—that you should treat me in such a cruel manner?"

"You are a spy."

"Yes; you are a spy, and we hang up all such," came the shouts from those around.

"I do not know what you mean by spy. Certainly I have done you no wrong."

"Will you tell us all you know about Bowlegs and his bloody band?"

"Yes—willingly."

"Does he not intend to attack this settlement and the fort?"

"Yea."

"When will the attack be made?"

"I do not know how soon, but I believe it will be done in a very short time."

"Does he not intend to kill every one of us, if he can?"

"Yes; he has sworn to kill every man, woman and child here, or lose one half his warriors in the attempt."

"Why did you come among us?"

"I learned the intention of the chief only a few days ago, at his camp up by Ochochebeco lake. I had met the palefaces, and one of them I loved, so I could not bear the thought that they must suffer. I begged of my chief not to harm any one here, and he spurned me with contempt and anger; called me a traitress, and ordered me not to leave camp. I found that I had aroused suspicion, and that I was watched. But I managed to escape, and with my little canoe, came down the river. Bowlegs followed

me, even here, and I was trying to escape from him when you first heard my cries."

"Why did you wish to come here?"

"To put the palefaces on their guard. I wanted to save them." Bruce burst into a laugh, and exclaimed:

"By thunder, she can lie equal to a white person. That story was all made up before she came near the settlement, for her to tell in case she was suspected by us. No; the matter is clear as daylight, and if any of the red devils are on the other side of the river, they shall soon see their spy dangling to that limb above us. The fire is burning bright enough. They can see what's going on almost as plain as if it was daytime."

At that instant, there came a sound something like the buzz of a bee, darting swiftly through the air.

Bruce uttered a yell of agony, and staggering back, fell to the ground.

There was a brief, but desperate struggle, a few hollow groans, and then he lay silent and motionless.

"She has struck him with a dagger, and killed him," said one of the party.

"String her up?" yelled the crowd.

But there came another cry, which sounded like one of pain, and then a settler exclaimed:

"The red devils are shooting arrows at us from the opposite side of the river! We'd better finish this job, and get under cover, if we want to save our hides."

An examination showed that the speaker was correct.

The first arrow had buried itself deep in the breast of Tom Bruce, piercing his heart, and now he lay upon the ground, dead.

The second had not been so well aimed; but it had struck the arm of another person, and the wound thus given was an ugly one.

But as other darts did not immediately follow, it was readily understood that there could not be any number of Indians on the watch, and the shafts already sent were, probably, from the unerring bow of Bowlegs himself.

The result of these shots was to render the settlers still more furious, and wild yells burst from their lips as poor Matteo was lifted from the earth.

But her hour of death had not yet arrived, for a rescue was near.

A young man, dressed in the uniform of a United States' officer, suddenly appeared upon the scene. A glance betrayed the condition of affairs.

There, suspended between heaven and earth, was an Indian maiden, and, to the mind of the officer, those who stood shrieking around her, their dark Spanish faces hideous with rage, appeared like very fiends.

Four men held the opposite end of the rope to which the poor creature was dangling, and they were even jubilant over that which seemed sport to them.

At this party the young officer dashed with drawn sword, and the blows he administered were no light ones.

The result was, the four men released their hold, but were loud and bitter in their curses.

Of course, Matteo fell to the ground; and springing to her side, the young man removed the noose from her neck, and raised her in his arms.

As he saw her face, an exclamation of surprise and horror burst from his lips, and turning toward those standing by, he exclaimed, fiercely:

"Infernal fiends! what is the meaning of this?"

"You use harsh measures, and call us harsh names," was the dogged response.

"And I'll use still harsher measures if you do not give me a satisfactory reply. Again I ask, what is the meaning of this?"

"It means that the girl is a spy, and, as such, we have a right to hang her, and you have no business to interfere."

"Go to your homes at once, monsters that you are! Go to your homes at once, I say!"

"We will not!" came several voices in reply. "This is our work, and if you don't let us alone, we'll make you!"

A squad of some dozen soldiers came up at that instant, and turning to them, the officer commanded:

"Fix your bayonets, men, and disperse this crowd of ruffians. If any one of them opposes you, run him through upon the instant. There is not one of these dogs but deserves instant death, for they are murderers at heart, and would soon have been literally so, if I had not arrived at the moment I did. This is poor Matteo, the faithful friend of the white people, and they were about to hang her."

There was not one of the soldiers but had heard of Matteo, and several there present had seen her. They held her in high esteem, and so they were only too ready to obey the commands of their officer.

In a moment, bayonets were fixed, and a charge was made.

There were none who were foolhardy enough to resist it, and soon the young man was alone with the poor girl.

Matteo had fainted. But she had recovered so far as to be able to recognize her rescuer, and she exclaimed:

"Oh, Henry! Am I with you, safe?"

"Yes, poor Matteo," was the reply of Henry Judson—for it was no other—"you are safe; for no harm shall come to you while you are here, and I am alive."

The young maiden burst into tears, and bowed her face upon the bosom of the man she loved, while he caressed her tenderly, and sought, in every way, to console her.

But another arrow had been sent from the opposite side of the river. It touched his cheeks, but did not break the skin.

This was a warning of danger; and raising the nearly-exhausted girl in his arms, he took his course back towards the fort.

His danger was not over, however; for two more arrows fell at his feet, and a rifle shot was fired, the bullet striking his sword scabbard, and glancing off without doing him

personal injury. This, he believed, came from one of the enraged settlers.

However, he safely reached the fort, where Mattoo was cordially received, and after giving the particulars of her adventures, she was assigned to quarters where it was deemed impossible for harm to reach her.

BILLY BOWLEGS.

CHAPTER III.

WORKING FOR VENGEANCE.

BILLY BOWLEGS was a most remarkable man. His mother was a Seminole squaw, but his father was a Spaniard. While yet a boy, the chief had some advantages of education, and might have chosen a civilized life; but he preferred the wigwam to the cabin—the rifle to the plow. No full-breed savage could possibly have been more crafty, and he possessed, in addition to this, a considerable amount of judgment. This made him a terrible foe, as he combined with these, great courage and endurance.

He thoroughly hated the palefaces, and more especially the Spanish race. He cursed that "Taint in his blood," as he termed it.

While a brave under Osceola, he had greatly distinguished himself, and at length, became the lion of the Seminoles.

He was perfectly familiar with the intricacies of the Florida Everglades, and for the United States troops to follow him was utterly out of the question. He felt himself powerful, and he had resolved to use that power until not an invader was left to pollute the soil of his country.

When he plunged into the river to save himself, he knew that shots would be fired after him, and he dove deep in the water.

As long as it was possible for him to remain beneath the surface, he did so, swimming for the opposite shore. Twice he arose to take breath, and at length, he felt that in the

darkness of the night, and the distance he had placed between himself and his enemies, that he was safe.

Reaching a small island in the centre of the stream, he crawled upon it, and then listened. He became convinced that he was not pursued; and seating himself upon the ground, he gazed back towards the settlement. He did not speak for some time; but that the demon was raging within his heart was evident, for he beat fiercely upon it, while low, muttering sounds came from beneath his clenched teeth.

For some time he sat thus; but presently he started to his feet, and exclaimed:

"The dogs! What are they doing?"

The fire which had been built under the tree where the execution was to take place, lighted the space around so clearly, that he could distinctly see the proceedings.

It was not difficult for him to understand the condition of affairs, and although he felt like wreaking a terrible vengeance upon Matteo, he did not wish her to die such a death at the hands of his enemies.

His bow and quiver were slung to his back, and using these, he fired the first shot, which resulted so fatally for Tom Bruce. When he saw the effect of his second, he muttered:

"Curses upon the dog! I have only wounded him! The range is too long."

He hesitated for a moment, and then continued:

"If they are on the watch for me at the settlement or fort to night, they will not expect me to come from this direction, so it is the safest. Safe! Pshaw! I'll not think of safety; for I almost feel that my single arm is a match for all the palefaces over yonder."

Saying this, the chief again walked into the river and commenced his return towards the place where his enemies had assembled.

Reaching the bank, he crouched low upon it, and watched. He saw the interference of Lieutenant Judson, and he felt considerable satisfaction to know that Matteo

was saved. He longed to get her in his own power, and this he resolved to do.

Once he drew his bow, and a shaft was aimed with deadly certainty at the heart of the officer. But something appeared to stay the arrow, and change the purpose of the chief, for the arrow was not discharged.

His motive, however, was soon explained, for he muttered:

"Death is not quite enough for vengeance. If I kill him, he will not know that he falls by my hands, and it will be no revenge at all. He has stolen her I would have made my queen, and he must feel the full weight of my resentment. He is brave, and will fight, and he has fire-arms, while mine are utterly useless, having been so thoroughly saturated with water. I'll wound, and capture him alive."

Once more drawing his bow, he let fly a shaft. His aim was a careful one, and he had intended to strike the temple of the young man, and to stun, but not to do him a serious injury.

When he saw the effect of his shot, he exclaimed:

"Confound it! What is the matter with me? I have always considered myself able to split a hair at fifty yards' distant; but now my hand trembles. I believe I am becoming a woman. The sight of that girl maddens me, and especially when I see her in the arms of another. I hoped to have made her mine, and by heavens, I will, too! Why should I not kill him? I will, I will!"

"You might have done it a dozen times!" exclaimed a voice, in the Seminole language, close by his side.

Bowless turned, and saw the form of an Indian, seated in a canoe, which was partially resting upon the bank.

He had not noticed his approach, so absorbed had he been by his own thoughts, and so noiselessly had the little craft been propelled through the water. But he recognized the voice of the speaker, and he asked:

"Waukegan, what news of my warriors?"

"They are ready to fight. Is it the same with our chief?"

was the question propounded, in a tone which partook something of sarcasm.

Bowlegs did not fail to observe this, and his reply evinced considerable anger, as he retorted :

"Waukeegan, I believe I have never flinched when danger threatened. I am bent upon a desperate mission to-night. Will you do your part?"

"Yes; tell me what I shall do."

"I am going into yonder fort. The paleface chieftain shall die to-night by my hands. I may be captured. If so, will you come to my relief?"

"Yes; shall I come alone?"

"Come and see me if you can, and if not, learn what disposition is to be made of me. Remember that Archingahola (Osceola as the name is usually pronounced) was captured by treachery, and now pines in a dungeon at Charleston. We will avenge him. If I am murdered, tell Wood Cat to bring up my warriors, and leave not a paleface to tell the tale of blood which will here be exacted, and to burn this settlement to ashes. Can I depend upon you?"

"Yes, my chief."

"Then take your canoe, and go around to the rear of the fort. Wait under the walls until daylight is approaching, if you do not see me before. Then, to avoid detection, cross the bay, and again await the return of darkness. If I am detected and fail to fight my way through, you will hear my voice, for I will make it heard. Go; now for I have work to perform."

During this conversation, Judson had arisen, and in company with Matteo, was making his way toward the fort. He had passed beyond the reflection of the fire and now it was impossible for his enemy to take anything like a certain aim, on account of the darkness. Two arrows were sent after the young officer and the maiden however, and, although they fell near them, they were not injured.

Bowlegs placed his ear to the ground, and listened for

a moment. An "ugh," escaped him, for he heard the foot-fall of those he had hoped to injure to such an extent, that he might be able to capture them. Then turning to Waukeegan, he said:

"I will drag that traitress out of the fort to-night, or die in the effort to do it. I will kill Colonel Taylor and that milk-sap who has stolen our pride from us. Go, now, and take your station."

Without further direction, Waukeegan struck out into the river, and was soon lost to view, while not a sound betrayed the fact that even a single canoe was moving over the water.

For some time Bowlegs gazed after the craft, even after it had disappeared from view, and his practiced ear could no longer detect the sound caused by the dipping of the paddle, or the ripple of the water. Then he turned his gaze towards the settlement, and upon the fort.

It appears that a new idea had suddenly occurred to him, for he uttered a grunt of satisfaction, and then he paused beneath a huge pine tree. Drawing his knife, he soon secured a considerable quantity of pitch, with which he covered about one-third the length of an arrow. Then proceeding to the spot where the fire was burning, he lighted the shaft. No sooner had he done this, than he sent it flying from his bow, watching its course as it sped through the air, leaving a trail of light behind it. It was but an instant before the flaming dart had fallen upon the roof of one of the largest dwellings, fixing its sharp point firmly in the pine slabs which formed the covering.

Bowlegs stood watching this scene for a few moments, and a low but fiendish laugh broke from his lips, as he saw the flame increasing in size. One home, at least, would soon be in ashes.

But this was not the sole motive of the chief. He knew that the alarm would soon be given, and that the attention of the troops as well as the settlers, would be attracted to that point, and this enable him the more easily to carry out his designs. It was as he supposed. The fire

increased rapidly, for the material which composed the dwelling was principally pine, and very dry. The alarm was given, and both settlers and soldiers came flocking to the place. The latter—indeed every man—was heavily armed and prepared for fight, which they expected, believing that the savages were about to attack them in a body. The women and children were hurried off to the fort for safety.

The flames had increased so rapidly that the space was lighted up for a considerable distance around, and there was great danger of Bowlegs being discovered. The bank of the river was not steep enough to conceal his movements, and so he waded into the water up to his neck, and commenced the circuit of the settlement in order to reach the fort.

In half an hour he stood under the rear wall of the fortification. The building had been entirely consumed, and all around was dark again.

Listening, the chief could hear the measured tread of the sentinel within. Then came the booming of a cannon, followed by other reports, until a dozen shots had been fired. The shells which were thrown could be heard tearing through the trees on the opposite side of the river, and then bursting. The Indian laughed in derision, for he knew that none of his warriors were there, although it was so supposed by those firing the shots.

It was not long after, before the approach of the relief guard was heard, the challenge given, and the sentinel changed. The countersign was given in a tone sufficiently loud for the chief to hear it, but that could avail him very little, for his nigganly form would be extinguished in an instant by any person who had but half a view of it.

Scarcely had the relief passed on before Bowlegs began slowly to climb the log wall. So cautious were his movements that not the slightest sound betrayed his presence. He knew this to be necessary, for the sentinel had been charged to use extra caution, as the savages were about.

Gaining a position where he could peer over the breast-

work, he saw the form of the guard pacing his beat back and forth, and evidently not very watchful, for he anticipated no danger in that quarter. Like the eyes of a very fiend glared those of the savage as they rested upon the doomed man. His hand wandered to his belt, and slowly he drew forth his tomahawk. He passed his fingers over its keen edge, and grinned as if enjoying a horrible satisfaction in contemplation of the bloody deed he was about to perform.

The sentinel had approached within a few yards of him, and then turned. Bowlegs raised his weapon and hurled it with all his force. The aim was unerring, and with a hollow groan the soldier sank upon the earth.

Quickly the savage leaped within the enclosure, and bent over the murdered man. He found that the instrument of death had buried itself deeply in the skull of his victim, and he knew that death had been almost instantaneous. Securing the tomhawk, he again placed it in his belt and gazed around him. There were a number of dark buildings forming a square, in the centre of the inclosure, and from these not the smallest ray of light was to be seen.

A little apart there was another building of a much better class. It was painted white, was two stories high, and from several of the windows lights could be seen. This the chief believed to be occupied by the officers, and he had no doubt but that Matteo was there too. He resolved to reach this building, but it was not an easy matter to do so, for he must cross an open space, and even in the darkness a moving form would be very apt to be seen. But the attempt must be made.

Prostrating himself upon the ground, he slowly worked his way onward, pausing every few moments to listen. He could hear the tread of different sentinels at the various points where they were posted, and he knew that none were in his path. But it was most likely that one would be found in front of the officers' quarters, and here was the great danger.

It required some little time for the chief to reach the desired point, for his progress was necessarily slow. But he did so at length, approaching at the rear. Creeping cautiously to the corner, he peered around and sure enough there was a guard. But this one would not be disposed of as was the first, for he was seated in the doorway, and only his legs and the end of his musket were visible.

Bowlegs knew that his aim would be sure, and that he could dispatch the man in an instant, as he had done the first, if he could only strike his head. This could not be done unless the soldier changed his position, which the wily monster resolved he should do. In order to effect this, he felt around himself upon the ground, and securing a good sized pebble, he threw it within a few yards of the guard and directly in front of him.

The result was as Bowlegs had anticipated. The soldier sprang to his feet and stood in a listening attitude. Then he advanced a few paces and paused.

To make doubly sure, the chief resolved to draw his victim nearer him, and to this effect he commenced whining in imitation of a dog. The guard advanced towards the corner of the building behind which Bowlegs was standing, and when he was within a few feet of it, the monster sprang forth with his uplifted tomahawk, and struck a terrible blow. Although it was a fatal one, the success of the savage was not as complete as in the first instant. Even in his dying struggle, the brave soldier grappled with his foe, and his voice rang out clear, giving the alarm.

But with a desperate effort, the Indian threw off the death grip, and darting to the rear of the building, he crouched low beneath its shadows.

Simultaneous with the cry of the dying man, there came an alarm from the opposite side of the enclosure. The guard who had first fallen had been discovered, and now there came the hasty tramp of the troops, who were collecting at that point.

There was considerable confusion within the officer's

quarters, also. Hasty steps were heard descending the stairs, and windows were thrown up, while heads appeared in view.

Near one of these, a ladder was standing, and when the head was withdrawn, Bowlegs mounted it, and passed through the opening. He saw an officer in the act of dressing, and he recognized him at once as the commander of the fort.

A thrill of pleasure shot through his heart, for he felt that he had still another, and an important victim in his power. He raised his tomahawk, and was about to hurl it, when a large dog sprang towards the opening, and commenced a furious barking.

This, he well knew, would betray him, and in an instant he had slid to the ground, and he darted around to the end of the building.

Here he saw a window open on the ground floor, and a dim light was burning within.

Eagerly he gazed into the apartment, and he believed it to be unoccupied. Doubtless, it had just been vacated by an officer, who would soon return.

Quickly he entered the room, and there he saw that the bed was occupied. With cat-like stealth he approached it, holding his weapon ready for instant use. He bent over the sleeper, and then he gave a grunt of satisfaction, for it was Matteo he gazed upon.

The poor maiden had become so exhausted by the exertions she had made, that she had not been aroused by the disturbance in the building and without.

A pearly tear-drop rested upon her cheek, and the silken fringes of her eyelids were moist, showing that she had been weeping; but, for all that, a sweet smile appeared to be playing around her lips. She never before had seemed so beautiful to the chief; and, indeed, she might well have been compared to an angel of innocence.

For some time did Bowlegs stand there, gazing upon her. And it was not impossible that she felt the influence

of his presence, for she moved about uneasily, the smile faded away, and low murmurings were heard.

Bowlegs longed to snatch her in his arms, and take her back to the forest; but he knew it would be impossible for him to do so at that time. Soon as she awoke, her cries would give the alarm, and even if he could stifle these, the garrison were fully aroused, and he would certainly be discovered, and his immediate death would be the result.

While standing irresolute, he saw that Matteo was about to awake, and so he crawled under the bed, thus effectually concealing himself, resolved to trust to circumstances for the further carrying out of his plans.

The excitement without seemed to be on the increase, and it approached nearer headquarters each moment. Heavy footfalls were heard, passing back and forth through the hallway, and voices spoke in evident excitement.

The dog who had confronted the chief at the officers' window, and driven him back, had been permitted to enter the hall, and up and down the stairs he rushed, howling in a fearful manner.

At length, he paused before the door of Matteo's room, and became perfectly furious, bounding against the panels as if he meant to force his way through.

Then a voice without was heard to exclaim :

"I tell you, colonel, that's Ingins in thar. My dog can smell 'em a mile off, that's sure. Jest open the door, an' see."

"No," was the reply; "it is only the Indian girl, Matteo, and your dog might harm her."

"Not a bit of it. Wolf don't hurt women—he's too much of a gentleman for that. Jest tell the gal to open the door, and I'll see the dog don't do her no harm."

"Matteo!" called a voice, "are you alone?"

"Yes," was the reply; for the girl had become fully aroused.

"Well, open the door. Don't fear, for the dog shall not harm you."

"Oh, I don't fear—I open the door."

Bowlegs knew now that his position was a critical one. Slowly he crept towards the foot of the bed, and glanced at the open window. It was his intention to leap through and run for his life; but his eyes encountered a gleaming bayonet, and so that point of retreat was cut off.

Now the door was thrown open.

The dog flew for the bed, and dashing under it, he grappled the chief, dragging him into full view.

The contest would soon have ended fatally for Wolf—for the savage used his tomahawk—had it not been for those who entered at the same time.

Bowlegs was seized, and although he struggled desperately, he was soon firmly bound, and there he lay upon the floor, helpless, but foaming with rage.

CHAPTER IV

DESPERATE MEASURES.

THE truly brave are usually magnanimous.

The officers at the fort were no exception to this rule; but they had suffered so much at the hands of the Seminoles that each one had almost grown to feel that his mission was that of vengeance rather than merely the defender of his country and the upholder of her laws.

This was especially the case with the private soldiers. They had seen many of the officers best beloved by them shot down in the swamps by the concealed and merciless foe, and thousands of their comrades' bones were bleaching among the Everglades, fearfully mangled, even after death, and no friendly sod to cover them. And these terrible deeds had not been performed by Osceola, the former chief, for that brave Seminole was as noble as he was elegant in person and accomplished in manners.

He was the *war* chief, and while he commanded, there was little of bloodshed, save in actual battle; but when the white people, through the veriest treachery, induced that great-hearted Indian to come into St. Augustine, and then sent him captive to Charleston, the mistake was their own.

From that moment, Billy Bowlegs, formerly the council chief, but now the sole commander, came into power.

The most bitter hatred and vengeance rankled in his heart, and with all the force of his eloquence, he painted to his followers a picture of horror, in which the palefaces stood in the foreground, until they had forgotten the coun-

sole of their captured leader, and were ripe for blood and carnage.

From that moment, no cabin was safe. The innocent had been butchered, maidens carried into captivity, homes burned to ashes and desolation far and wide.

Not a valley was there which had not echoed with the death wail of some helpless being, and not a river which had not been crimsoned with blood. Red flame had cast its lurid glare through forests and over plain; and for all this Bowlegs was accountable.

It was not to be wondered at, then, that the feeling against the chief was of the most bitter character.

The soldiers would have rushed upon him at once, and plied him to the floor with their bayonets, but for the interference of the officers, and even these would scarcely have interposed in behalf of the redskin had they not had a motive outside their personal feelings for doing so.

But Bowlegs was saved for the time.

With a tone of command, Colonel Taylor ordered him to arise to his feet.

The look given by the chief was a withering one, and he did not move.

For a moment, the officers stood in silence, and with something of a look of wonder, regarded the helpless but defiant savage.

But the commander was a man not easily disconcerted; and calling to some of the soldiers without, half a dozen of them entered, and he continued:

"Take this fellow to the black room and tie him up by the thumbs. When he is humble, and in a communicative humor, we will talk to him."

The soldiers needed no further bidding, and the chief was forced to his feet.

As he left the apartment, he uttered a deep curse, in which the name of Matteo was mingled.

The poor girl trembled as she heard it, and she clung closely to Judson, who was standing by her side.

Bowlegs saw this, and it only rendered him the more

ferce; he could not restrain his rage, and he gave vent to the expression :

"Matteo, traitress that you are! think not to escape me. Both yourself and your paleface lover shall be placed beneath the sod, even though the king of the Floridas is now fettered and a prisoner."

What more he would have spoken was not known, for he was hurried away.

Of course, a consultation of officers must now be held, and discussion ran high as to the disposition which should be made of the crooked-legged savage.

Some were in favor of hanging him at once, but calm judgment prevailed. It was well known that if Bowlegs was executed, the feeling of the savages would be redoubled for vengeance, and hundreds of white settlers, who were yet permitted to occupy their houses in peace, would be slaughtered in the most merciless manner.

So it was determined that the life of Bowlegs should be spared, if he would consent to check the flow of blood; and it was further hoped that he would induce his followers to surrender, and that peace would be the result.

In order to render him humble by breaking his spirit, he was left in the guard-room during the entire day, a cord bound tightly around his thumbs, and his arms extended to such a length above his head, and attached to a beam above him, that his position was really a painful one, as his feet barely touched the floor.

Most men would have become utterly exhausted in this situation; but not so with the redoubtable Billy.

When the officers entered just as darkness was again settling over the earth, he turned his flashing eyes upon them, and asked :

"Well, have you come to beard the lion in his den, or to gloat over him in his charms?"

"We come to offer conditions of peace, and I presume you will be glad to accept them," returned the commanding officer, in a mild manner.

"The paleface, blue-coated coward *lies!*" retorted Bowlegs, with bitter sarcasm.

That was a hard word for a brave man to bear, and like lightning the sword leaped from its scabbard. But judgment prevailed, and the weapon was returned. The commander then said:

"Chief of the Seminoles, I speak to you in honesty. If you are prepared to negotiate a peace, I will treat with you. If not, you must expect the severest punishment—even that of death. You have had no mercy upon our helpless women and children, and you ought not to expect any yourself. But for the sake of the settlers in Florida, I will spare your life if you will come to my own terms, and then keep your pledge."

The chief had swung himself around so that his face confronted that of the officers. It was with some difficulty that he held himself in that position, and as he gazed upon his foes, the eyes of a tiger at midnight never shone brighter. He glanced up at the cords which bound his thumbs, and then he said:

"Servant of the paleface so-called President of the United States—do you know what you had done?"

"What have I done?" asked the commandant, mildly.

"I will tell you ~~what~~. You have tied up the *King of Florida* by the thumbs. What are you? An officer—a servant. You receive less than three hundred dollars a month for your services, even though one half an idiot ought to command more than that. Now look upon me. I own these broad acres, dotted with lakes, checkered with rivers and lined with forests. In our swamps the palefaces dare not come. They have tried it to their sorrow. They have come out against us a thousand strong, and gone back with only a corporal's guard. I love not blood. Go from my country, and I will never molest you, but stay here, and you have to encounter Billy Bowlegs, the chief in council, and the chief in war, of the Seminoles. Do you understand me? You, a menial, have tied me up; ~~me~~, the king of Florida! Now I will give you my answer

with regard to peace. Before three days have passed, I will burn every building in your settlement to the ground, even as I did that last night."

"Before to-morrow night you will probably be in your grave."

"Better under the sod than under a tyrant's heel. Tell me what you have to say, and tell me plainly, for I would give you as plain an answer."

"Then it is this. We will treat a peace, or you have not twenty-four hours to live. You deserve death, even by torture, and you have but this chance to save your life."

"I shall not accept your terms, and I defy you. Do your worst, and take the consequences."

"Did you kill the sentinels on duty?"

"I did."

"What are your intentions with regard to the young maiden, Matteo?"

"To take her back to my stronghold."

"Would you harm her?"

"She deserves death for her treachery; but she may be spared. That will depend entirely upon her future conduct."

"But she is not a Seminole."

"What makes you think so?"

"It is plainly to be seen that she is not. There is not the slightest trace of the Indian in her features. I believe you stole her when a child, and perhaps at this very moment her parents are mourning her loss."

"You are right—they are. Her father wronged me years ago, and I swore the most deadly vengeance upon him. I would have killed him a dozen times, but I prefer to let him live."

"By heavens! you shall confess who she is, and she shall be restored."

"Do you propose to wring a confession from me?"

"I do."

"In what manner?"

"You shall see. Men, take this self-styled king and last

him firmly to the spare-wheel of the artillery, and let him stand there, unless he becomes penitent and confesses all."

The soldiers needed no second bidding. The chief was taken down and conveyed into an open space in the center of the inclosure. Here there was a single field piece, and a caisson near it. To this there was a fifth wheel swung at the rear. Bowlegs was firmly lashed to it, and his position was a most uncomfortable one as he lay stretched upon the hard spokes.

Among them who had been quite officious was the owner of the dog—a man by the name of Joseph Barber. He resided several miles back from the bay, and lived principally by hunting. He was familiar with the forests and swamps of Florida, and had often been solicited to act as a guide for the troops, but for the safety of his wife and daughter, he had, up to this time, declined to do so, not wishing to incur the enmity of the Indians. But he had learned that it was the intention of Bowlegs to attack the settlement, and he had come in for the purpose of placing the commander of the fort on his guard.

Bowlegs had been watching this man with a good deal of earnestness, and at length he said :

"Barber, I have spared yourself and family, but I should not have done it, for now I see that you are my enemy. But it is not too late yet. You have sealed your own doom, and that of your wife and child. Before a week shall pass by, you shall gaze upon their lifeless bodies, and then die yourself."

"Shall such a monster be permitted to live?" asked Lieut. Judson, addressing the commander.

Bowlegs laughed bitterly, and answered :

"It is only the good, like yourself, who are doomed to die early. Are you prepared for such an event, Henry Judson?"

The young officer half drew his sword from its scabbard but returned it again, and turned away in disgust.

Bowlegs retorted :

"Brave young man! why don't you strike me? I am

bound, and cannot return the blow. Come, display your courage, and strike!"

"Let us leave the wretch," said the commander, turning away.

The others followed him, leaving two soldiers behind to act as a guard over the prisoner.

Slowly the day passed away, and Bowlegs remained in his painful position. He was able to move his head, and eagerly he watched the setting sun. He swept the distant tree-tops with his eyes, and several times an expression of disappointment passed over his face. At length a faint sound reached his ears, and a smile of satisfaction instantly began to play around his lips. The sound he heard was repeated. It appeared like the screech of a wild-cat, but it had a peculiar significance for Bowlegs. He knew it to be the voice of one of his own warriors, and that his men were at work in his behalf. He answered the shout, and he knew that he was heard, for the cry was repeated back again.

The guard paid very little attention to these signals. If they heard the distant cry at all, they supposed it to come from some wild beast, and that of Bowlegs they believed to be wrung from him by rage and pain. Neither did they observe in the distant tree-tops, several small dark specks, but the captive chief saw them, and he understood the meaning. His men were there, and they could command a view of the interior of the fort, and his own position would become known to them.

Darkness came on, and with it came another pelting thunder shower. Two men still remained on guard over Bowlegs, while the sentinels around the line of breast-works were doubled. Every precaution was taken to guard against a surprise, and to prevent assistance from reaching the prisoner. It had been determined to leave him in his present situation, in order if possible, to humiliate him, and bring him to terms. But the officers did not know the man with whom they were dealing.

The hour of ten o'clock had arrived, and the rain was still coming down in torrents, while an occasional flash of

lightning illuminated the space around. Not a sound had been heard which indicated the presence of an Indian, and those in the fort felt quite secure, although the vigilance of the guard was in no way relaxed.

But without the breastwork, a dark figure was moving along, now slowly, and then striking into an easy trot. A flash of lightning revealed the fact that it was a large black dog, very like the one owned by Barber. Nearer and nearer he came to the walls of the fort, and at length passed through an opening which had been left as a water drain, and was within the enclosure.

One of the guard challenged, but of course, the dog did not condescend a reply. The soldier ran forward with his gun at a ready, but when he discovered the character of the supposed foe, he laughed, and returned to his post.

Onward the dog sped, trotting leisurely along from point to point, evidently quite indifferent to everything around him. Once or twice he was ordered to halt, but still permitted to pass on.

Presently, he came near the spot where Bowlegs was confined. Here he was confronted with a bayonet; but it was quickly withdrawn as the second sentinel said:

"It's only Joe Barber's dog. Let him alone, and he'll eat up that redskin in five minutes."

"I wish he would," was the reply.

The dog approached the prisoner, and mounting his feet upon him, began to growl furiously.

He was permitted to remain in that position for a moment, and then one of the sentinels said:

"It won't do, Jack. The colonel wants to get something out of the redskin before he is hung up; and if we let the dog kill him, we will be held responsible."

"That's a fact. I'd drive the beast away; but we must let him have one or two nips first!"

As the soldier said this, he advanced, and taking the butt of his musket, he gave the dog a slight blow, and exclaimed:

"Come, Wolf, be off with you!"

His dogship did not appear to relish this interference with his plans, for he turned upon the guard with a fierce growl.

The soldier dropped his musket, threw up his hands, uttered a hollow groan, and fell backwards upon the ground.

His comrade sprang forward to lend his assistance. But at that instant, Bowlegs leaped from the wheel, and drove a knife deep into the breast of the second soldier, who fell across the lifeless body of his companion.

The supposed dog instantly assumed an upright position, and grasping the hand of Bowlegs, exclaimed:

"My chief! your warriors await you on the other side of the river."

"Good. But it will not be an easy matter for me to leave this accursed fort. The sentinels are thickly posted. I heard them challenge you several times."

"I have brought a second dog skin with me, and with it you can leave the fort first. I will follow after."

The savage described the manner in which he had entered, and pointed out the opening.

Bowlegs prepared himself, and proceeded on his way. In doing so, he passed the officers' quarters, and pausing before the window where he had seen Matteo, he gazed in.

She was there, seated by her bedside, evidently buried in the deepest thought.

Bowlegs assumed, as near as possible, the voice of Judson, and spoke in a low tone:

"Come to the window a moment, Matteo, for I wish to speak with you."

"Henry!" repeated the maiden, springing to her feet.

"Yes; it is Henry."

With a feeling of security, the poor girl advanced to the window. A single shriek from her lips would give the alarm, and this he resolved to prevent. As she passed her head through the opening, the wretch seized her with

one hand and with the other he dealt a blow so terrible that she sank senseless upon the window ledge.

Quickly he drew her out, and then gazed around him. Everything was quiet, but how could he reach the opening with his burden? As a dog, he had no fear with regard to himself; but in carrying so large a bulk it certainly would attract attention. And there was no time to be lost. The girl had only been stunned by the blow, and probably would soon recover. Then the alarm would be given.

Bowlegs resolved, however, to run the venture, and he began his advance boldly and swiftly across the open space. It so happened that at that very moment, the relief guard were passing around, and the various sentinels were thinking more of their rest than of enemies. The result was that Bowlegs was not noticed until he was within a few yards of the opening through the wall of the fort.

At that moment, however, Matteo had so far recovered that she understood herself to be in danger, and a wild cry burst from her lips. Bowlegs echoed it with a yell of defiance and exclaimed:

"Dogs of palefaces, I told you that I would burn your settlement, and I'll do it now!"

Like a deer the chief darted forward and passed through the opening. He heard the shouts of his enemies behind him, but he heeded them not. Reaching the water, he leaped into a large canoe which was in waiting for him, and then struck out for the opposite shore, which was safely gained.

A large number of his warriors were present, and they gathered around him awaiting his commands.

"Burn! burn those hovels!" he yelled.

This order had been anticipated, and hundreds of arrows prepared for the purpose. In an instant the very air appeared to be all ablaze, as the flaming shafts flew through it, alighting upon the roofs, and piercing the sides of the different dwellings. The settlers worked with all their might to extinguish the flames, but this they found it im-

possible to do. Many fell beneath the arrows, the fiery heads of which entered their quivering flesh. The conflagration soon became general, and it was evident that in an hour the threat of Bowlegs would be fulfilled, and not a dwelling in that settlement would be left standing.

But those at the fort were not idle. Volley after volley of musketry was poured across the river, and the cannon belched forth its streams of fire. The bullets rattled among the trees where the Indians had taken their position, and shell burst rapidly and with considerable effect, although the redskins kept themselves as much under cover as possible.

Bowlegs had anticipated making a charge that very night, for he felt that he had warriors sufficient to take the place. But he heard loud cheering on the water, and saw a vessel coming up. Reinforcements, which had long been expected, had arrived, and the chief prepared for a retreat, which was to commence at daylight.

CHAPTER V.

DEEDS OF HORROR.

BOWLEGS had never before experienced such an intense hatred for the palefaces as he now felt. It was a consolation to know that he had not humbled himself, and that he had been able to carry out his threats up to the present moment. How he had escaped would puzzle the officers, as they had left him firmly bound to the spare wheel of a caisson, with two soldiers to guard him. Those soldiers would be found dead, the one pierced through the heart with a knife and the other with the brains oozing out of a cleft in his skull. The ropes which bound the chief would be found to have been cut. But how this had been accomplished, would still remain a mystery. None of the guard had seen an Indian enter the fort, and none had been seen to leave it, with the exception of the redoubtable Billy himself.

Just as the first ray of the morning gray began to appear in the east, the Seminole warriors began their retreat, taking their killed and wounded with them, for the firing from the fort had been kept up nearly all night, and several of the savages had been slain, and quite a number more or less injured.

Bowlegs remained behind, resolved to wait until the day was further advanced, in order the more fully to satisfy himself with regard to the present strength of his enemy, after having received their reinforcements, and what was the probable intentions of the commander. He did not doubt but that he would be followed, and that another battle would soon take place. This he longed for, as he

felt a thrill of satisfaction every time he saw a paleface fall, and when they were cut down by hundreds, as had often been the case, even within his sight, he felt an excess of joy which knew no bounds.

He did not part with Matteo, but retained her with him. He also kept a single savage, to lend such assistance as he might require, and now, lying concealed in an undergrowth, he awaited a clearer light, and further developments.

A sad scene was presented. Where the dwellings of the settlers had stood the evening before, now only a mass of blackened embers were to be seen. Near the smouldering embers there were groups of women and children, seated upon the ground, evidently mourning their sad fate.

Near the river's bank there were a number of men who were engaged in digging in the earth. Others were collecting prostrate bodies of those who had fallen the night before, and were now being placed to rest, while the very air was pregnant with the wails of the living friends. But instead of awakening pity in the heart of Bowlegs, he only laughed in devilish glee.

When the Seminole warriors began their retreat, they sent up a yell of defiance, which they continued at intervals until their voices could no longer be heard. Bowlegs had a motive in this. He wished those at the fort to understand that he was no longer opposed to them, but that he had taken up his march for the interior.

The sun had only fairly gilded the forest tree-tops, when a small boat was seen to put off from the fort. It contained but a single passenger, and rapidly it was pulled out into the bay. The chief feared the interference of Matteo, and so he proceeded to blind her by placing a bandage tightly over her eyes, and then he pinioned her hands in such a manner that she would be unable to remove it. Placing her in the hands of the Indian who had remained with him he then gave his entire attention to the man in the boat.

Nearer and nearer he came, but he appeared to use

great caution, evidently hesitating about landing until he was fully satisfied that he would not be compelled singly to face any number of dusky fiends.

Bowlegs was within a few yards of the water, but thoroughly concealed, and here he awaited the approach of the paleface officer. As he had hoped it proved to be no other than Henry Judson. So solicitous had the young man been with regard to Matteo, that he had ventured to come across the river in search of her. If he could only find her footprints in the sand, and know that she was still with the Indians, and living, it would be a source of consolation to him, for there would still be hope that she might some day be recovered; or escape. His greatest fear was, that she had been killed at once, and her body thrown into the water.

Landing, the young man bent low, and searched around upon the sand. A tiny footprint was there, and others near it. Judson followed the direction they indicated, holding his sword ready for use in one hand, and a large pistol in the other.

He was within a few yards of Bowlegs, and had not yet discovered the savage, who was awaiting the moment for his spring. Not a sound had betrayed to the young officer, the fact that a human being was near him. But now Matteo spoke. She said:

"Surely, chief, you do not fear a poor maiden; will you not remove this bandage from my eyes, and let me see the light of heaven?"

Judson heard these words, and recognized the voice at once. That he had fallen into an ambush, he well knew, but not how many he would be compelled to encounter. He threw himself in an attitude of defense.

Bowlegs knew that he must now be prompt in his action, and he instantly sprang from concealment, and with his tomahawk raised, rushed forward to meet his enemy. Judson leveled his pistol and fired, but by suddenly dropping to the ground, the chief avoided the bullet. As quickly he was upon his feet again, but he met the point

of a sword, and received a severe flesh wound in the arm. He clutched the blade with his hand, and as it was drawn back from his grip, his fingers received deep gashes. But he gave no heed to this. A great triumph, or an utter failure was before him.

Turning aside the point of the blade, he grappled with Judson. The Indian was much the stronger of the two, but the officer was the more agile, and for a few seconds it seemed as if the contest would be a doubtful one. The chief received a blow upon the head from a pistol in the hands of Judson, and a howl burst from his lips. It seemed almost to madden him, and he dealt a return blow with the head of his hatchet, which caused the young man to reel and sink half senseless upon the ground.

The victory was with the savage, and in a short time his enemy was bound in such a manner as to be perfectly helpless, but still left free to walk.

This he appeared at first inclined to refuse to do, but several fierce blows from the brutal Bowlegs, proved to him how vain was resistance. Besides, Matteo was there, and he felt that it would be some consolation to be with her, for, aside from seeing him in his present situation, he believed she would devise some comfort from his presence.

The bandage was now removed from the eyes of the maiden, and she saw the man she loved. With a cry, half of pleasure and half of pain, she sprang to his side and reared her head upon his bosom, while she looked up lovingly into his eyes. Neither could embrace the other, for their arms were pinioned.

Bowlegs laughed in devilish glee, and the maiden turned a look of loathing upon him, and exclaimed:

"Foul monster, is it not enough that this brave officer is in your power? Must you taunt him by your sneers?"

"In every possible manner," was the heartless response.

"Yes—I might have known it."

"You mean to say that it is just like me?"

"Yes."

"But I shall do more than taunt."

"Kill him, I suppose!"

"Yes, kill him; but torture comes first."

"Oh I horrible!"

"You have seen my method of dealing with my enemies."

"Yes—oh, yes!"

"But none have ever endured, in comparison, what I shall inflict upon him. I shall rack my brain to invent engines of torture, and you shall stand by and witness it all."

"Why do you hate him so?" What harm has he ever done you?"

"He is an accursed paleface, and has invaded my country. Many of my warriors have fallen, and I know not how many he has personally slain. And then he attempted to steal you from me, after having first made you a traitress."

"No; that is not true. He never asked for my love—I gave it to him freely, even without the request having been made. He is not to blame because I love him."

"Still, he shall suffer."

"Chief, I am but a maiden, and can do nothing now, for I am bound."

"What would you do if you were not bound, my pretty bird?"

"If Henry Judson dies, I believe it will kill me. I do not think his brave spirit will scarcely have left his body, before my own will follow it."

"You *may* die at the same instant."

"Perhaps you will kill me?"

"You know you merit death by our laws."

"Then I shall expect little mercy at your bloody hands."

"What if I spare your life?"

"And not that of Henry?"

"He shall surely die."

"Then I will tell you. The moments that are given me after he is gone, I shall devote to vengeance. Sleeping or

waking, you must beware, for at the very first opportunity, I will rid the world of such a monster as you are."

Bowlegs appeared surprised. He stood in silence for a few moments, with his long arms folded across his powerfull breast, and his snake-like eyes fixed upon the speaker. Then he drew a deep sigh, and replied:

"What a jewel you are, and I came so near losing you. I did not dream that you possessed so much courage and resolution as you have evinced during the last few days. You must become a queen, for you would grace the tribe. I did intend you as the bride of one of my braves, but you shall be my own. True, the King of Florida is somewhat advanced in years, and is not as handsome as was Osceola, but he can *command*—he can control a wife—even such a one as yourself."

"Me *your* wife?" and the maiden shuddered as she spoke.

"As sure as you are now living."

"Oh, Henry!" and Matteo pressed closer to the bosom of her lover.

"Do not heed the monster," he said, in a firm tone of voice. "He will be prevented from carrying out his threats, be assured."

"Did I carry out those I made last night?" he asked with a sneer, as he pointed exultingly to the blackened ruins across the water.

"True; but there will come an end of your villainies."

"Do you doubt but that I shall rend you, joint from joint?"

"You may murder me—no doubt you will; but vengeance will follow."

"Do you refer to the threat of Matteo?"

"No; but to the oath of my companions in arms. If I am murdered, these forest trees will soon be black with savages, hanging to the limbs by the neck."

"Ha! ha! ha! Where do you propose to find so large a number of my warriors?"

"Even among the Everglades, if at no other place."

"How many times have you tried to penetrate them and what has been the result? You are going there now; but I do not think your companions in arms will follow you. They have tried that game to their entire satisfaction, depend upon it."

"We have been injudicious enough to attempt the penetration of your stronghold, with small numbers. It will not be so again."

"Oh, yes! I recollect. You received reinforcements during the night. How large a force arrived?"

"Enough to march through the heart of Florida, and hang up every dusky dog who offers opposition. If I do not return to the fort in an hour, they will know that I have been captured. They will commence the advance at once. You will be asked what has become of me. If I am not produced, you will be the first to die a dog's death."

"Indeed."

"Sneer if you will. When that hour arrives, your sneers will be as vain as your cowardly pleadings.

"Do you call me a coward?"

"One so merciless is nothing else. You may possess a certain amount of brute courage, and be defiant so long as you are safe. But let certain death stare you in the face, and your craven heart would sink within you.

These words evidently cut the chief to the very soul. He uttered a howl of rage, and actually foamed in his madness. He raised his hatchet as if he intended to strike the speaker, and probably would have done so, had he not wished to reserve him for a more terrible death.

At that moment his attention was attracted to the opposite shore. Half a dozen boats were being filled with armed men, and this accomplished, they moved towards the spot where the chief, the Indian and the captives were standing.

Bowlegs waited to see no more. Attaching a cord to Judson, he dragged him swiftly along, while Matteo was kept in charge of the other savage. An attempt on the

part of the young officer to resist, resulted in his being dragged for a considerable distance upon the ground. In this manner his flesh would be lacerated, if not his life destroyed, and so he concluded to offer no further opposition.

Matteo had also seen the boats, and wishing to let the soldiers know that herself and probably Judson were close at hand, she gave utterance to several piercing shrieks.

"Stop her mouth, or kill her!" said the chief.

The Indian who held her in charge appeared inclined to do the latter, for he raised a huge knife over her head. Seeing this, Bowlegs continued:

"Don't harm her, and I'll settle the business."

With this he gave Judson three or four terrible blows, and turning to Matteo, said:

"So will I punish your lover every time you attempt the least opposition."

"I will be silent," she replied, meekly.

"See that you are, and that you offer no resistance in any manner."

Both Bowlegs and the Indian now commenced the regular dog-trot, and it was continued for several miles, and until the maiden and Judson were both so exhausted that they were scarcely able to proceed. Sinking upon the ground, Matteo exclaimed:

"Oh, I can go no further without rest!"

At that instant a young girl suddenly appeared, bent over the exhausted maiden for an instant, and then ran to a spring close at hand, bringing her some water in a coconut shell cup.

Bowlegs grinned horribly, and then exclaimed:

"This is fortunate. If you had not paused here, Matteo, I should have passed the cabin of old Joe Barber without noticing it, or thinking about him. This is his pretty daughter, and it reminds me that the old hunter made himself very officious in tying me up, and that I swore to be revenged. I will have my satisfaction now."

"You do not mean to harm that poor girl?" asked Jud-
son.

"No; merely carry her away a captive."

"That is not all I shall do."

"What more?"

"Kill her mother. That is the way I can strike deepest
into Barber's heart."

"Surely you would not do such a thing as that?"

"You shall see."

Mrs. Barber had heard voices, and she came forth from her cabin, which stood half concealed behind some creeping vines. She had barely come into view, when Bowlegs let fly an arrow at her bosom. Fatal had been his aim. The poor creature threw up her hands, a low cry escaped her lips, and then she fell backward.

Lilly Barber, the daughter, was so terror-stricken when she witnessed the deed of blood, that she took a few steps forward, with arms extended, and then fell to the ground utterly unconscious.

The monster proceeded to place the body of the murdered woman in a position where Joe, the husband, would be sure to find it on his return, and then he set fire to the cabin.

His revenge gratified here, the advance was continued, a second captive maiden composing the party. Nothing further of note occurred, and at the close of the third day, the monster and his prisoners joined the main band, who were encamped on the banks of Lake Ocochobee.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEMINOLE STRONGHOLD.

THE position chosen by the Indians was naturally a strong one. It was situated upon the bank of Lake Ocochobee, near the head of the river bearing the same name. Away towards Tampa Bay there lay stretched out a dense forest, the huge cypress trees almost shutting out the sunlight from the earth, even at noonday. In the night, the blackness was of the densest description.

Near the water the canebreak grew rank, interwoven with tall grass, which afforded an excellent place of concealment for the savages. An advancing foe might be met, even before they were aware of the fact that a concealed enemy were near, and be most mercilessly slaughtered. This had been the case in many battles when the soldiers had met with defeat.

If the savages found a retreat necessary, they could slip away unseen, and a pursuit would be next to impossible, for only those perfectly familiar with the intricacies of the swamps would pass over them with safety, for there were hundreds of points where men would sink so deeply in the mire that it would be almost impossible for them to extricate themselves if they were not actually buried alive.

To advance with artillery, and even horses, was utterly out of the question.

Near the head of the river stands a bold, sharp, rocky

bluff, rearing its rugged head some two hundred feet above the water's surface.

To ascend its side was not an easy matter for one unacquainted with its winding pathways, and only by mounting from crag to crag could the summit be reached.

Numerous caves were here, and several buildings formed of logs, were half hid away in the niches. Beastworks had been formed in different locations; indeed, that isolated ridge was the Gibraltar of Florida.

The wily Bowlegs had formed other places for defense in case of an attack by a powerful foe. Pathways for the purpose of deceiving the troops had been formed. These appeared to be plain, and to lead up the steep, but they would suddenly terminate beneath some huge rock which could not be surmounted. And directly over such places, large quantities of stone and other heavy material had been collected, and bound in their places with ropes. This could be severed, and the masses would be hurled downward, crushing everything before it.

It was into one of these caves that Bowlegs conveyed his captives. His arrival had created the greatest excitement among his warriors, for the savages were thirsting for the blood of their foes. They anticipated a glorious time in the torture of Judson and the maiden Matteo, who had escaped a few days ago, and had been brought back.

None entertained the least idea that Bowlegs intended to make her his own wife; and, indeed, the chief had only recently thought of such a thing himself.

One out of the many expected her as his own bride, and although it had never been decided who should possess the prize, there were several who believed himself to be the favored one.

And now another captive was there. This was Lilly Barber. For some time she had been in an agony of grief, and it had not yet passed away. Her own captivity was a secondary consideration to her; it was the cruel death of her mother of which she was thinking.

That grief had marred her beauty greatly, for her eyes

were red and swollen with weeping, while her cheeks were ashy pale.

Still, she was lovely, and the first thought which came to the mind of many, was:

"Here is another paleface bride for one of us."

The first attention was given to the maidens, and then the young officer came in for his share. The dusky fiends flocked around him, dancing in wild delight, yelling in fury, brandishing their knives, and threatening their victim. He almost expected instant death, but this was not the purpose of Bowlegs. He stood gazing upon the scene, his long arms folded, and a smile of satisfaction resting upon his lips.

This work over, the chief caused his captives to be dragged forward, up the ledges, to the caves. It was with considerable pleasure that Bowlegs pointed out to Judson the arrangements he had made for defense, and then he asked:

"Well, sir, do you think your friends will attempt to come up here?"

"Stronger places have been taken by brave men," was the reply.

"Brave men! How many such are to be found among the paleface invaders of my country?"

"Do you question their courage?"

"I do."

"You will learn your mistake."

"Are you one of those brave men?"

"Have you seen any exhibition of cowardice about me?"

"Oh I will do you the justice to acknowledge that you make a virtue of necessity; but when your hour of trial comes, we will see if you can die as a red warrior does."

"You will find that I shall not flinch, if I am to die."

"If you are to die! Do you doubt that your doom is sealed?"

"I do. Something within me tells me that my end is

not yet. But you speak of cowardice. I think that title might be applied to yourself."

"Did I exhibit any such quality by coming into your fort, killing your soldiers, and bringing back the maiden who had deserted us?"

"It was a bold movement."

"Its boldness made it a success."

"True; but have you not acted the coward since we met?"

"Tell me how."

"I am your captive, alone to oppose you and your warriors, and you keep me bound. It is an evidence that you fear me."

"Personally I would not fear to stand before a dozen such, in battle, but I am determined you shall not escape, as you appear so confident that you will. I would not lose such a prize as yourself, for half my country."

"Will you not tell me precisely what my fate is to be?"

"Certainly. You are to be placed in one of the caves, and remain there for seven days. You will then be compelled to run the gauntlet of fire, which you will find some difficulty in doing, for you will be much weakened by hunger."

"Monster."

"Such you will find me. But will you hear me further?"

"Yes."

"After the gauntlet running is over, then will come the most interesting part. Do you see that tree which hangs over the precipice below?"

"Yes."

"You see that it is blackened as if by fire?"

"I do."

"I will tell you the fate of a captive I brought here a month ago. He was one among the number who treacherously captured Osceola, and sent him to a prison. He deserved his fate, and in that fate, you may read your own.

"Let me hear it."

"Do you know to whom I refer?"

"I do not."

"Did you learn the fate of Lieutenant Jackson?"

"No."

"He suddenly disappeared, you know?"

"Yes."

"And you have no idea what became of him?"

"No further than it is believed that he was captured by the savages and murdered by them.

"Well, I will enlighten you now. One dark and terribly stormy night, I crept through the narrow streets of St. Augustine. Its inhabitants did not know that Bowlega, the King of Florida, was among them. They would have given much for the information, for I was there as an avenger. I was in search of Jackson, whom I had seen, having met him on the battle-field of Withlacovehie.

There he taunted me on my ungainly form, and my hatred for him was of the most intense character. When I entered the city, I did not even know his lodgings, but I crept from house to house, and listened, until I learned where he was to be found. He slept in the second story of a hotel, and, watching, I saw his face at the window. Fortune or the fiends favored me, for by the side of the hotel there grew a large tree, the branches of which extended to within a few inches of the sash, which was closed, on account of the storm.

"Into the branches of this tree I mounted, and gazed into the apartments. A bright light was burning there, and the paleface officer was preparing for bed. He retired, little dreaming that the eyes of his deadly foe were glaring upon him; nor did he for a moment think what was to be his fate, and how soon he was to suffer.

"Well, he extinguished the light, and I waited for two hours in order that he might sleep."

"And strike him while he slept."

"You think so?"

"It would be like you."

"When you hear all I have to say you will acknowledge that it was not one bit like me. Strike a man dead at a single blow, and you are not revenged upon him at all, for he remains unconscious of the fact that he has fallen by an enemy's hand. Torture him, so that he dies by inches—dying every moment for whole days, while you are exulting over him—and then he feels the weight of your resentment."

"And so you tortured poor Jackson?"

"I did."

"Well, let me hear your story."

"After waiting until I thought he slept, I tried the window sash and found that I could raise it. Doing so, I stepped into the apartment. His measured breathing assured me that he was undisturbed. Approaching his side, I gave him a blow upon the head, which I knew would render him instantly senseless, without proving fatal. I had prepared a plaster of wax, or pitch taken from a pine tree, and this I bound tightly over his mouth that he might not give the alarm when he should recover. Binding his hand and foot, I threw him from the window to the ground below. Leaping after him, I threw him over my shoulder, and was soon safely beyond the limits of the city."

"I need not tell you how I reached this place with him, but I did so. He had no clothing but his nightshirt for protection, and his body became much lacerated by our passage through the forest. Still, he did not complain, but was defiant and even taunting in his words. But he became a coward at last."

"I do not believe you."

"You believe the other portion of my story, I suppose?"

"I know of no reason why I should disbelieve it."

"And you want the rest?"

"Yes."

"When I arrived here, I threw him into that cave, so tightly bound that he could not move. Here I left him in the dense darkness, and to his own reflections. Each day I visited him. For the first three days his spirits did not

sink. Then he asked for water and food, and at length he actually begged for it."

"And you gave him none?"

"For seven days he had neither food or water, and he actually went raving mad, constantly shrieking for water."

"Oh, monster that you are."

"On the seventh day he was brought forth and water given him. He drank furiously and seemed to revive. Then our lines were formed, and he was forced into it. He was too weak to go far, and fell."

"And thus you murdered him?"

"No."

"Well, let me hear the end."

"That tree which is leaning over the chasm, had been covered with pitch pine. Into the branches he was taken and there bound. Then I set fire to the pitch."

"Oh, my God!"

"He shrieked and howled in his agony, but at length the fire severed his fetters, and down went a fiery body, whirling through the air, and falling upon the rock below. Now you know your own fate."

Without further words, the young officer was dragged into a cavern, and there left in utter darkness.

CHAPTER VII.

ADVENTURES OF A NIGHT

AFTER placing Judson in his dungeon, Bowlegs led the two maidens into a rude cabin, which he used as his own private quarters, and where a favored few were only permitted to enter. Among these were a fierce brave, known as Wild Cat.

This savage, although the pretended friend of the chief, was really not so. He was ambitious, and longed to become the chief ruler of the Seminoles. Of course, that worst of all human passions—jealousy—raged in his heart. However, he had managed to conceal his feelings, and the chief did not even suspect his intentions, which had not as yet assumed any definite form.

He crept closely to the cabin occupied by the chief, and listened.

Immediately after entering his quarters, the maidens were unbound, and they sank exhausted upon a couch of furs, weeping in each other's arms. They had met for the first time but a few days before, but sharers in misfortune, each tried to comfort the other, and lighten each other's sorrows.

Matteo had witnessed terrible deeds perpetrated by the tribe, and her heart had sickened many a time. But she knew no other home but with them, and she did not know that beyond the forests, there resided those who would give her protection, where she could live happily, and in peace, until she had met Henry Judson. She had been sent out by Bowlegs as a spy, himself accompanying her to Tampa Bay. Here she first saw the officer. He became deeply interested in her, and she returned that interest with an ardent love.

From that moment she became discontented, and night and day the image of Judson was before her. When she first learned that it was the intention of the chief to attack the fort and the settlement, she became almost frantic with grief, and upon her knees she begged the Seminole to forgo his purpose, declaring her love for the officer. This only enraged Bowlegs, and created a suspicion in his mind that she would turn traitress were opportunity afforded her, but he looked upon her as a person of no resolution and very little courage, and he did not suppose for a moment that she would attempt to penetrate the forest alone, in order to reach the fort. It was not until after she had gone, that he could realize that she had done so, and only till that moment did he begin to understand his own feelings.

Now she was back again, and in his power. What would be the result?

For some time the monster sat gazing upon those two helpless beings and at length he exclaimed:

"Come, arouse yourselves, for I have much of importance to say to you both."

"I do not wish to hear you speak—your voice is hateful to me," returned Matteo, with a shudder.

"And alike so to me," added Lilly Barber.

"Matteo, did it never strike you that you are not an Indian maiden?"

"Never until I met Henry."

"He told you that you were not?"

"He told me that he believed I was not."

"You are not."

"Oh! then can you tell me of my parents?"

"Yes."

"Then do so, for mercy sake."

"I thought my voice was hateful to you."

"I will not say so again—only tell me of my parents."

"Will you also listen to me, Lilly? you will be deeply interested."

"Yes—I will listen."

"When I was a young man, I saw and loved a Spanish maiden, who resided in St. Augustine, with her parents. I had not thoroughly identified myself with the Seminoles then, and but for circumstances, might have led a life of civilization. But my love was spurned, and a rival took possession of the one I had worshiped. This maddened me, and I resolved upon the direst vengeance. Shall I tell you the name of that rival?"

"Yes."

"It was Joseph Barber."

"My father!"

You shall hear. He was married to the object of my affections, and my love soon changed to a hate as deep as I am capable of feeling. Well, they heeded me not, and lived on happily. A daughter was born to them. It was scarcely a year old, when I stabbed the mother in her bed, and with the infant, I came and joined my tribe. She has been with me ever since, and has now grown almost to womanhood."

"Where is that child?"

"It is yourself."

"Myself?"

"Yes; yourself."

"Oa! am I the daughter of Mr. Barber?"

"You are."

"Then Lilly is my sister?"

"No—she is not."

"Will you not explain?"

"Yes. I told you that I killed your mother, and I did so. You saw me shoot down Barber's wife a few days ago. Of course she was not your mother; neither was she the parent of Lily."

"Not my mother?" asked Lily in evident surprise.

"No—neither is Barber your father."

"Oh! you must be mistaken."

"I am not."

"Then tell me all."

"There also resided in St. Augustine at the same time, a family by the name of Judson. This man had insulted me, and I swore revenge upon him. He had two children, a son and a daughter. The girl was but two years old, and the lad was about eight. I resolved that, together with the child of Barber, I would take both of these with me to my stronghold. I succeeded in capturing the girl, but not the boy. Have you ever seen that boy of which I speak?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"I kept track of him, and resolved that he should some day fall into my hands. He has become my victim."

"And you have killed my poor brother?" asked poor Lily, with a shudder.

"Listen! Your parents mourned you as lost. Of course they clung closer to their son. But in time he was sent to West Point as a cadet. He graduated, and became a United States soldier. He came into my country and fought against me. He won the heart of Blanche Judson, whom he only knew as Matteo, and he would have stolen from me. He is now in my power."

"Oh, heavens! is Henry Judson the boy of whom you have been speaking?"

"He is."

"And my brother?" asked Lily.

"He is your brother."

"And are my parents still living?"

"Both are still living in St. Augustine."

"How is it that I have been looked upon as the daugh-

ter of Mr. Barber? Certainly I have no recollection of any but my forest home, or of any other parents but those I have so dearly loved."

"I will tell you. You had been with me about one year, when we had a battle with the settlers. Joe Barber had taken a second wife, and taken up his residence near Tampa Bay. He was engaged in the fight, and in some manner got possession of you, Lily. I did not learn the fact until about six months afterwards, and as you were a troublesome little brat, I determined to let him retain possession of you until you arrived at that age when you would be a fitting wife for one of my warriors. The time has come!"

"Me! the wife of a savage!"

"As sure as you are now living."

"May you not be mistaken? Are you certain that my parents still live, and that Henry Judson is my brother? Mr. Barber always called me his own child."

"You will find the letters B. J. marked upon your left arm in India ink."

"You are right."

"Your real name is Blanche Judson. I can readily believe that Barber thought you to be his own child, or, at least, wished to think so, and reared you as such."

"And is my name Matteo?"

"No; it is simply one I gave you. Have you not often observed the letters L. B. upon your arm? I have learned you to read that much."

"Yes—here they are."

"And your true name is Lillian Barber."

"Then have you the heart to keep us from our parents?"

"I shall do so."

"And to murder Henry?"

"Yea."

"Certainly you will permit us to see him?"

"Never, until he is brought forth to death."

"Will he know that I am his sister?"

"In his dying moments I shall so inform him, in order to render his death more bitter."

"Oh! can no prayers or tears move you from your purpose?"

"Nothing can change me!"

"What are your intentions with regard to us?"

"To take you far from hence to the Indian territory. With you as my wives—"

"Your wives!"

"Yes, for such you are both to become. With you, I shall be happier there than here. My means for keeping up this war are being fast exhausted, and my warriors are weary of constant strife. The next moon will find us on our way to a place from which you will never return."

At this instant Wild Cat sprang through the door into the cabin. He was evidently considerably excited, for his eyes flashed fire, and his powerful breast heaved with the emotions that raged within.

Bowlegs turned quickly, confronting him, and when he saw that something unusual had occurred, he asked:

"What is the matter, Wild Cat?"

"The palefaces are coming through the forest in swarms."

"Let them come, and meet their death."

"This may not be the case. Their force is a large one."

"How do you know this?"

"One of our scouts has just come in, and so reports."

"Go yourself and learn all the particulars. No—remain here and take charge of the men. I will go. In the first place, place a trusty guard over these two captives, and then collect my warriors where they can fight to the best advantage. Take charge of them in person until I return and relieve you."

Without further words, Bowlegs seized his rifle and bounded down the crags towards the dense forest.

Wild Cat stood gazing after him for an instant, and then muttered through his clenched teeth:

"So you would make both of the paleface maidens your own, when they have been promised to us? You shall not do it. I will set them at liberty first. You would aban-

don't this country and go far away. Be careful, or you will soon go to the spirit land."

The maidens had caught a portion of these words, and advancing, they knelt before him, raising their hands in an imploring manner.

"Then Matteo said:

"Wild Cat, you have been my friend."

"Yes."

"Have you forgotten how I attended you once when you were sick and likely to die?"

"No."

"Then will you not set us free?"

"The chief will hold me responsible for your safety."

"You do not fear him then?"

"Not him alone; but the whole tribe would decide against me."

"Oh! what shall we do then?"

"If you were at liberty, could you find your way back to the fort?"

"Oh, yes."

"I shall place a guard over you as I have been commanded. Watch until he sleeps, then go; but be careful. A few miles back in the forest you will find the paleface troops."

Wild Oat called an Indian to act as guard, and in the presence of several others, gave him instructions to watch the captives strictly, saying that he would be held responsible for their safety with his life.

In a moment after, his voice was heard marshaling his warriors, who commenced to gather at a certain point. But that voice was soon silent again.

It was but a few moments after, when a dark form moved cautiously along through the deep cuts in the ledge, towards the cabin where the maidens were confined. He was not discovered by the guard, until he leaped upon him, and a knife was buried deep into his

breast. The Indian sank back with a hollow groan, and expired.

A moment after, the maidens heard a voice exclaim:
"The guard is sleeping now—go." At the same time, a knife fell at their feet.

"That was the voice of Wild Cat," said Matteo, and the two began to think of escape.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAIDENS.

"The guard is sleeping now!"

These words sounded strangely, especially as they were uttered by the brave who had placed that guard over the captives, and they did not understand its significance.

But the word "go," had been added.

Approaching the door, Matteo gazed forth. Sure enough—there was the sentinel lying stretched upon the ground, either sleeping or dead.

Quickly Matteo secured the knife which had been thrown into the apartment, and taking her companion by the hand, she whispered encouragingly:

"Come—don't fear—I know the pathways, and we can escape."

"And my brother?"

"I have not forgotten him; he shall accompany us."

"Heaven grant that it may be so."

"Heaven will hear your prayer."

With the utmost caution the maidens passed out of the door, lest they should awake the guard. Matteo had almost made up her mind that his sleep was a feigned one. She did not know that it was of that character which knows no waking, and that Wild Cat had stricken the blow himself, in order that the captives might escape. He had taken care to give the sentinel strict instructions in the presence of others, in order to clear himself. It would be thought that an enemy had found his way into the stronghold, and had committed the deed.

Whether the captives would make good their escape or

not, he could not tell. They might be retaken, but if such was the case, they would not betray him.

Wild Cat had really one good motive in view in his act. He felt great friendship for Matteo, and even gratitude. But he was prompted principally by selfishness. Could he have made the girl his wife, or either of them, he would not have permitted their departure, but he felt sure that none of the tribe would venture to dispute the will and the claims of their chief.

So he became a kind of dog in the manger.

He had not even given Judson a thought. Had he done so, he certainly would have taken steps to have prevented his escape.

As soon as the maidens had passed the dead guard, they made their way to the mouth of the cave where the young officer was confined. Not a soul was present to prevent their entrance, and soon they were surrounded by the densest darkness.

Their own footfall, although they walked as cautiously as possible, echoed through the archway, so that they were compelled to pause ever and anon, and listen.

Then came the pattering of water-drops as they fell from the roof of the vault on the stony floor. And in such a place was Henry Judson confined.

Presently Matteo whispered his name. There came no response, and then she spoke in a much louder tone :

“Henry! Henry! Are you here?”

“Who calls?” came a voice.

“It is Matteo. Don't you know me?”

“Is it indeed you, Matteo?”

“Yes; and we have come to save you.”

“We?”

“Yes—myself and Lilly.”

A footfall was heard, a few steps taken, and then Judson caught a fair creature in his arms, and pressing her in rapture to his breast, kissed her lips passionately, and exclaimed :

“Oh, Matteo! what joy it is to hold you once more!”

my heart, even in such a place as this. We will yet be free and happy."

"Are you not bound, Henry?"

The young officer turned partially around, for the speaker was Matteo, but it was not the one he held in his embrace; but he answered:

"No, Matteo, I am free. By tugging with the cords I have just managed to release myself and was coming in search of you. But it is Miss Barber I am holding in my arms, and not yourself."

"Your embraces are holy ones, for it is your own sister who is resting upon your bosom—a brother's bosom."

"My sister!"

"Yes; Blanche Judson—she whom you have mourned as lost for so many years."

"Great heavens—explain."

The maiden went on to give the particulars just as she had received them from Bowlegs. Henry listened with breathless attention, and when the recital was over he clasped both maidens to his heart, and there were other water-drops in that dismal cavern, than those that came dripping from the cold walls.

But now they must think of escape. They approached the entrance of the cavern, and were there confronted by a powerful savage, with whom the young man sprang forward to grapple.

We must briefly go back to other scenes, which are to connect with those already given.

It has been seen that several armed boats put off from the fort, while yet Judson was in the hands of Bowlegs on the banks of Tampa Bay.

It was considered by his friends, a very rash act on the part of the young officer, to venture away from the fort at all, and none knew his intentions until they saw him out upon the water.

Some were in favor of following him at once, while others declared that he was fully able to take care of himself.

But when they had waited half an hour, and he did not reappear, the action was decided upon, and the armed boats put off.

Among those who occupied them, was Joe Barber, and he had consented to act as guide, for it had been decided that the savages should be followed up if they retreated, even to their stronghold on Lake Ocochobee.

When crossing the bay, the practiced ears of Barber caught the sound of Matteo's voice, even when the others could not hear it. After landing, he examined the earth around, and then said:

"That old crooked-legged devil hasn't been away from here only a few minutes, and he's got Matteo and Judson with him as captives, for here are their tracks as plain as the nose on your face."

"What can be done?" asked an officer.

"Not much till the whole of your troops move. Bowlegs will not halt till he gets to the lake, and there he'll make a big fight. But I reckon we can thrash him this time. I know every inch of the place."

"You think we cannot overtake the chief and his captives?"

"Not a bit of it."

"Well, we move upon him at daylight to-morrow. You will be ready?"

"Yes; all I've got to do is just to run up to my cabin, and bring Polly—that's my wife—and Lilly, that's my daughter—down to the fort, so I'll know they're safe."

Barber paused and placed his hands upon his brow as if he felt pain. One of the officers noticed this, and asked of him:

"What is the matter, Joe?"

"Nothing—only a thought not altogether pleasant passed through my mind."

"Will you not tell us what it was?"

"No matter now. Good bye; I'll be back in two hours."

With these words, the old hunter struck into an Indian

dog-trot, and was soon lost to view of those standing upon the margin of Tampa Bay.

As he passed swiftly along, he murmured to himself:

"Suppose that devil in human form has been there! He swore revenge agin me last night, and I can almost fancy that I can see my cabin burning now, and Polly and Lilly lying dead before it."

The old man quickened his pace, but after a time he sank upon the ground, uttering a wild cry. He had arrived in sight of his home, and saw that it had been burned to the ground.

It was some little time before he was able to move, and then he crept slowly forward. He reached the cabin, and his eyes fell upon the form of his wife. She had partially raised herself, her elbow resting upon the ground, and her head upon her hand. She was conscious, for she had drawn the arrow from her bosom, and was trying to check the flow of blood with a handkerchief.

The husband bound up the wound as best he could, and then he asked:

"Where is Lilly?"

"I think there," and the woman pointed in the direction Bowlegs had taken, but she spoke very faintly.

An examination of the earth, showed the fact that another female captive had been added to the villain's list, and he knew that Lilly was in the power of Bowlegs. He felt sure that she would not be murdered, but she might be reserved for a fate far worse than death.

Carefully raising his wife in his arms, he bore her a short distance, and then placed her in a little canoe, which was moored to the bank of a narrow, but deep stream. Rapidly as possible he guided the craft along, ever anon bending over the wounded woman to see that she yet lived.

She breathed easy, and seemed to have fallen into a quiet slumber.

In an hour after the little craft crossed the bay, and landed near the fort. A litter was brought, and placing

Mrs. Barber upon it, she was taken to comfortable quarters. A surgeon was in immediate attendance, and he proceeded to probe and dress the frightful wound.

Joe watched him closely for a time, and several times tried to speak, but it seemed as if his tongue could not give utterance to the question he would ask. But at length he whispered :

“Doctor, will she live?”

“Yes.”

“Oh ! you don’t mean to tell me that ? You’re not deceiving me ? Tell me all now, for I can bear it better than at any other time.”

“She will live. It is a bad wound, but no vital part has been struck, and with care, she will recover.”

“That’s worth a million. But now for my little gal.”

“Has she been captured ?”

“Yes ; but I’ll have her back. Take good care of the mother, and heaven will bless you. Good bye for a time.”

So saying, Joe Barber bounded forward, entered his canoe, crossed the bay, and was soon lost to view in the forest upon the other side.

CHAPTER IX.

SOMEBODY SPINS A "YARN."

A PARTY of hunters are encamped in a block-house in the forest, and while Joe Barber is proceeding on his journey, we will listen to some of the stories told by the veteran woodsmen as they are sitting around their blazing fire.

"Come, Dick, give us a yarn!" cried one of the hunters when the evening meal was over.

"Yes, yes; and let it be one of your best," chimed in several others.

"Well," said Dick; "as I suppose there would be no use in refusing, I'll begin at once, and the yarn I shall spin first will be about the Adventure of Captain Sam Brady, a boy of the right stamp, and who found himself in many a tight fix in his time."

"I shall first tell you about the death of Captain Sam Brady's father and brother, and how he revenged them," began Dick. "I can vouch for the truth of what I relate as I have made it my particular business to inquire into these matters out here; and I have either obtained my information from those who were engaged in the exploits, or who knew those who were. After the massacre at Fort Freelong, on the west branch of the Susquehanna, in 1775, a fort was built at the mouth of Muncy Creek, and the command of it given to Captain John Brady.

"Frequent skirmishes took place between the whites and Indians, who resumed their old practice of harrassing the settlers by dividing themselves into small squads; taking some prisoners, scalping others, and carrying away or destroying the cattle and movable property of their victims. Brady, it appears, left the fort for the regular

service, prior to the battle of Brandywine.

"Shortly after the return from the camp of Captain Brady and his son, a company of men formed for the purpose of aiding a friend to cut his oats, near the mouth of the Loyalsock Creek. James Brady, son of Captain John, and a younger brother of Captain Samuel of the Rangers, went along. According to a custom in those days, which was, that if no commissioned officer were present, the company selected a leader, whom they styled 'captain,' and readily obeyed as such; James was selected leader or captain of this little band, of twenty men. After arriving on the ground, they placed two sentinels at opposite sides of the field; the other sides, having clear land around, were not thought to require any. The guns were all placed together at one side of the field, and the order was, that, in case of alarm, all were to run to the rifles.

"The first day, which was spent in cradling the oats, nothing remarkable happened; during the night a strict watch was kept. The next day in the evening, one of the sentinels fired, and cried 'Indians.' The young captain, without looking around for his men, ran for his rifle. When near the guns, he was fired upon by a white man, with a pistol. Happening to stumble over a sheaf of oats, he fell, and the ball missed him. The Indians, supposing him dead, ran to secure his scalp. He fell within reach of the guns, and, seizing one, he shot the first Indian who approached him. He now discovered that his men had fled and left him to contend with the savages alone. Despair rendered him but the more determined to die gallantly. He caught another gun, and brought down the second Indian. They then rushed in upon him in numbers; he was a stout, active man, and struggled with them for some time. At length, one of them struck his tomahawk into his head. He was stunned with the blow, and for a time remained altogether powerless, yet, strange as it may seem, he retained his senses. They tore the scalp from his head

as he lay in apparent death, and it was quite a trophy to them; for he had long red hair.

"After they had scalped him, as he related afterwards, a little Indian was called and made to strike the tomahawk into his head in four separate places; then, leaving him for dead, they took the guns and fled to the woods.

"After coming to himself, he attempted, between walking and creeping, to reach a little cabin, where was an old man who had been employed to cook for the working party. On hearing the report of the guns, the old man had hid himself, but when he saw Brady return, he came to him. James begged the old man to fly to the fort, saying, 'The Indians will soon be back, and will kill you.' The old man refused to leave him. Brady then requested to be taken down to the river, where he drank large quantities of water. He still begged the old man to leave him, and save himself, but he would not. He next directed his old friend to load the gun that was in the cabin, which was done, and put into his hands; he then lay down, and appeared to sleep. A noise was suddenly heard on the bank above them; he jumped to his feet and cocked the gun. It was soon discovered that the noise was made by some troops who had come from the fort on horseback in pursuit of the Indians. They carried the brave young 'captain' to the fort, where he lived for five days. The first four days he was delirious; on the fifth, his reason returned, and he described the whole scene he had passed through with great minuteness.

"He said the Indians were of the Seneca tribe, and among them were two chiefs; that one of the two chiefs was a very large man, and by the description he was supposed to be Cornplanter; the other he personally knew to be the celebrated chief Bald Eagle, from whom certain creeks, and the Ridge so called, in Centre and Huntingdon counties, have their name. 'The Bald Eagle's nest,' as his camp was called, was for part of the year at the mouth of the creek called Bald Eagle, which empties into the Sus-

quehanna near the Great Island, and about thirty miles by water from the scene of action.

"On the evening of the fifth day, the young captain died, deeply regretted by all within the fort. Vengeance, 'not loud, but deep,' was breathed against the Bald Eagle; but he laughed it to scorn till the fatal day at Brady's Bend, on the Allegheny.

"War with the Indians broke out all along the frontiers, and men of activity and courage were sent to the forts on the West Branch, and every precaution taken for the security of the settlements. It became necessary to go up the river some distance to procure supplies for the fort, and Captain John Brady, taking with him a wagon team and guard, went himself and procured what could be had; on his return, in the afternoon, riding a fine mare, and within a short distance of the fort, where the road forked, and being some distance behind the team and guard, and, in conversation with a man named Peter Smith, he recommended it to Smith not to take the road the wagon had done, but the other, as it was shorter. They traveled on together till they came near a run where the same road joined. Brady observed, 'This would be a good place for Indians to secrete themselves.' Smith said, 'Yes.' That instant, three rifles cracked, and Brady fell; the mare ran past Smith who threw himself on her, and was carried in a few seconds to the fort. The people in the fort heard the rifles, and, seeing Smith on the mare coming at full speed, all ran to ask for Captain Brady—his wife with, or rather before the rest. To their question, where is Captain Brady? Smith replied, 'In heaven or hell, or on his way to Tioga,' meaning he was either dead or a prisoner to the Indians.

"The men in the fort ran to the spot; the wagon guard had also been attracted by the firing. They found the captain lying on the road, his scalp taken off, his rifle gone, but the Indians were in such haste that they had not taken either his watch or his shot-pouch.

"Samuel Brady, captain of the rangers, or spies, for the

people called him by both names, was in Pittsburgh when he heard of his father's death.

"It chanced that the party of Indians, one hundred strong, he encountered at Brady's Bend, on the Allegheny, several years after the death of his father and his brother James, was a war-party of Senecas, under the command of Cornplanter, on their march to the Bald Eagle's nest; and that the Bald Eagle himself was in company with them.

"Captain Samuel Brady recognized the Bald Eagle on that day in the pass, and fired at him, but with what effect he knew not till afterwards. When the battle was over, he searched for the Eagle's body and found it; a ball had pierced his heart; and the blood of the young 'captain' at Loyalsock, was found to have been fatally avenged by the hand of his brother on the bank of the Allegheny.

"It is said that Captain Brady, on hearing of the slaughter of his father and brother, vowed that he would revenge their death, and never be at peace with the savages. But this is doubtful. It is certain that after the death of his relatives had been revenged, Captain Brady did not show so much of a sanguinary disposition as has been attributed to him. But to proceed with the exploits.

"Captain Brady had returned from Sandusky perhaps a week, when he was observed one evening by a man of the name of Phouts, sitting in a solitary part of the fort, apparently absorbed in thought. Phouts approached him unregarded, and was pained to the bottom of his honest heart to perceive that the countenance of his honored captain bore traces of deep care and even melancholy. He accosted him, however, with the best English he had, and soothingly said:

"Gabtain, what ails you?"

Brady looked at him for a short time without speaking; then, resuming his usual equanimity replied:

"I have been thinking about the redskins, and it is my opinion there are some above us on the river. I have a mind to pay them a visit. Now, if I get permission from the general to do so, will you go along?"

Phouts was a stout, thick Dutchman, of uncommon strength and activity. He was also well acquainted with the woods. When Brady had ceased speaking, Phouts raised himself on tiptoe, and bringing his heels hard down on the ground, by way of emphasis, his eyes full of fire, said:

"By dunder and lightnin! I would rader go mit you, captain, as to any of the finest weddins in tis guntry."

Brady told him to keep quiet and say nothing about it, as no man in the fort must know anything of the expedition except General Brodhead. Bidding Phouts call at his tent in an hour, he then went to the general's quarters, whom he found reading. After the usual topics were discussed, Brady proposed for consideration, his project of ascending the Allegheny, with but one man in company; stating his reasons for apprehending a descent from that quarter by the Indians. The general gave his consent, and at parting took him by the hand in a friendly manner, advising him how to proceed, and charging him particularly to be careful of his own life, and that of the men or man whom he might select to accompany him. So affectionate were the general's admonitions, and so great the emotion he displayed, that Brady left him *with tears in his eyes*, and repaired to the tent, where he found Phouts in deep conversation with one of his *pet* Indians.

"He told Phouts of his success with the general, and that, as it was early in the light of the moon, they must get ready and be off betimes.

"They immediately set about cleaning their guns, and preparing their ammunition, and, having secured a small quantity of salt, they lay down together, and slept soundly until about two hours before daybreak. Brady awoke first, and stirring Phouts, each took down the 'deadly rifle,' and whilst all but the sentinels were wrapt in sleep, they left the little fort, and in a short time found themselves deep buried in the forest. That day they marched through woods never traversed by either of them before; following the general course of the river, they reached a small

creek that put in from the Pittsburgh side; it was near night when they got there, and having no provision, they concluded to remain there all night.

Phouts struck fire, and after having kindled a little they covered it up with leaves and brush to keep it in. They then proceeded up the creek to look for game. About a mile from the mouth of the creek, a run comes into it; upon this run was a lick apparently much frequented by deer. They placed themselves in readiness, and in a short time two deer came in; Phouts shot one, which they skinned and carried over to their fire, and during the night jerked a great part of it.

"In the morning, they took what they could carry of jerked, and hung the remainder on a small tree, in the skin, intending, if they were spared to return, to call for it on their way homeward.

"Next morning they started early, and traveled hard all day; near evening, they espied a number of crows hovering over the tops of the trees, near the bank of the river. Brady told Phouts that there were Indians in the neighborhood, or else the men who were expected from Susquehanna at Pittsburgh, were there encamped, or had been some time before.

"Phouts was anxious to go down and see, but Brady forbade him, telling him at the same time, 'We must secrete ourselves till after night, when fires will be made by them, be they whom they may.'

"Accordingly, they hid themselves among fallen timber, and remained so till about ten o'clock at night. But even then they could still see no fire. Brady concluded there must be a hill or thick woods between him and where the crows were seen, and decided on leaving his hiding-place to ascertain the fact.

"Phouts accompanied him. They walked with the utmost caution down towards the river bank, and had gone about two hundred yards when they observed the twinkling of a fire at some distance on their right. They at first thought the river made a very sharp bend, but, on proceeding far-

ther, they discovered that it was a fork or branch of the river, probably the Kiskeminetas.

“Brady desired Phouts to stay where he was, intending to go himself to the fire and see who was there; but Phouts refused, saying, ‘No, by George, I will see too.’ They approached the fire together, but with the utmost care; and from appearances judged it to be an Indian encampment, much too large to be attacked by them.

“Having resolved to ascertain the number of the enemy, the captain of the spies and his brave comrade went close up to the fire, and discovered an old Indian sitting beside a tree near the fire, either mending or making a pair of moccasins.

“Phouts, who never thought of danger, was for shooting the Indian immediately; but Brady prevented him. After examining carefully around the camp, he was of opinion that the number by which it was made had been large, but that they were principally absent.

“He determined on knowing more in the morning; and forcing Phouts away with him, who was bent on killing the old Indian, he retired a short distance into the woods to await the approach of day. As soon as it appeared, they returned to the camp again, but saw no living thing, except the old Indian, a dog, and a horse.

“Brady wished to see the country around the camp, and understand its features better; for this purpose, he kept at some distance from it and examined about till he got on the river above it. Here he found a large trail of Indians, who had gone up the Allegheny: to his judgment it appeared to have been made one or two days before. Upon seeing this, he concluded on going back to the camp and taking the old Indian prisoner.

“Supposing the old savage to have arms about him, and not wishing to run the risk of the alarm the report of a rifle might create, if Indians were in the neighborhood, Brady determined to seize the old fellow single-handed, without doing him further ‘scathe,’ and carry him off to Pittsburgh. With this view, both crept toward the camp

again, very cautiously. When they came so near as to perceive him, the Indian was lying on his back, with his head towards them.

"Brady ordered Phouts to remain where he was, and not to fire at all, unless the dog should attempt to assist his master. In that case, he was to shoot the dog, but by no means to hurt the Indian. The plan being arranged, Brady dropped his rifle, and, tomahawk in hand, silently crept towards the 'old man of the woods,' till within a few feet; then raising himself up, he made a spring like a panther, and, with a yell that awakened the echoes around, seized the Indian hard and fast by the throat. The old man struggled a little at first, but Brady's was the grip of a lion; holding his tomahawk over the head of the prisoner, he bade him surrender as he valued his life.

"The dog behaved very civilly; he merely growled a little. Phouts came up, and they tied their prisoner. On examining the camp, they found nothing of value except some powder and lead, which they threw into the river. When the Indian learned that he was to be taken to Pittsburgh, and would be kindly treated, he showed them a canoe, which they stepped into with their prisoner and his dog, and were soon afloat on the smooth bosom of the Allegheny.

"They paddled swiftly along for the purpose of reaching the mouth of the run on which they had encamped coming up; for Brady had left his wiping rod there. It was late when they got to the creek's mouth. They landed, made a fire, and all lay down to sleep.

"As soon as daylight appeared, the captain started to where their jerk was hanging, leaving Phouts in charge of the prisoner and his canoe. He had not left the camp long, till the Indian complained to Phouts that the cords upon his wrist hurt him. He had probably discovered that in Phout's composition there was a much larger proportion of kindness than of fear. The Dutchman at once took off the cords, and the Indian was, or pretended to be, very grateful.

"Phouts was basied with something else in a minute, and had left his gun standing by a tree. The moment the Indian saw that the eye of the other was not upon him he sprang to the tree, seized the gun, and the first Phouts knew was that it was cocked and at his breast; whereupon he let out a most magnificent roar and jumped at the Indian. But the trigger was pulled, and the bullet whistled past him, taking with it a part of his shot-pouch belt. One stroke of the Dutchman's tomahawk settled the Indian forever, and nearly severed the head from his body.

"Brady heard the report of the rifle and the yell of Phouts; and supposing all was not right, ran instantly to the spot, where he found the latter sitting on the body of the Indian, examining the rent in his shot-pouch belt. 'In the name of Heaven,' said Brady, 'what have you done?' 'Yust look, Gabtain,' said the fearless Dutchman, 'vas dis red rascal was aput;' holding up to view the hole in his belt. He then related what has been stated with respect to his untying the Indian, and the attempt of the latter to kill him. They then took off the scalp of the Indian, got their canoe, took in the Indian's dog, and returned to Pittsburgh the fourth day after their departure.

"The captain related to the general what he had seen, and gave it as his opinion that the Indians whose camp he had discovered, were about making an attack upon the Susquehanna settlement. The general was of the same opinion, and was much affected by the information; for he had just made a requisition upon the country for men, and had been expecting them on every day. He now feared that the Indians would either draw them into an ambuscade and cut them off, or fall upon their families, rendered defenceless by their absence.

"The injuries inflicted on the Indians by the troops under General Brodhead quieted the country for some time; he kept spies out, however, for the purpose of watching their motions and guarding against sudden attacks on the settlements. One of these parties, under the command of Captain Brady, had the French Creek country assigned as their field of duty.

The captain had reached the waters of the Slippery Rock, a branch of Beaver, without seeing any signs of Indians; here, however, he came on an Indian trail in the evening, which he followed till dark, without overtaking the Indians. The next morning he renewed the pursuit, and overtook them while they were engaged at their morning meal.

“Unfortunately for him, another party of Indians were in his rear; they had fallen upon his trail, and pursued him, doubtless with as much ardor as characterized his pursuit, and at the moment that he fired upon the Indians in his front, he was, in turn, fired upon by those in his rear. He was now between two fires, and vastly outnumbered. Two of his men fell, his tomahawk was shot from his side, and the battle yell was given by the party in his rear, and loudly returned and repeated by those in his front.

“There was no time for hesitation, no safety in delay, no chance of successful defence in their present position; the brave captain and his rangers had to flee before their enemies who pressed on their flying footsteps with no lagging speed.

“Brady ran towards the creek. He was known by many, if not all of them, and many and deep were the scores to be settled between them. They knew the country well; he did not; and from his running towards the creek, they were certain of taking him prisoner. The creek was for a long distance above and below the point he was approaching, washed in its channel to a great depth. In the certain expectation of catching him there, the private soldiers of his party were disregarded, and throwing down their guns, and drawing their tomahawks, all pressed forward to seize their victim.

“Quick of eye, fearless of heart, and determined never to be a captive to the Indians, Brady comprehended their object, and his only chance of escape, the moment he saw the creek; and by one mighty effort of courage and activity, defeated the one and effected the other.

He sprang across the abyss of waters, and stood rifle in

hand on the opposite bank in safety. As quick as lightning, his rifle was primed, for it was his invariable practice to prime first; the next minute the powder-horn was at the gun's muzzle, when, as he was in this act, a large Indian, who had been foremost in the pursuit, came to the opposite bank, and with the manliness of a generous foe, who scorns to undervalue the qualities of an enemy, said, in a loud voice and tolerable English:

"Blady make good jump."

"It may indeed be doubted whether the compliment was uttered in derision, for the moment he had said so, he took to his heels, and as if fearful of the return it might merit, ran as crooked as a worm-fence; sometimes leaping high, at others suddenly squatting down, he appeared no way certain that Brady would not answer from the mouth of his rifle, but the rifle was not yet loaded."

The captain was at the place afterwards and ascertained that his leap was about twenty-three feet, and that the water was twenty feet deep.

"How many feet did you say Brady leaped?" inquired Joe Morland.

"Twenty-three feet—he measured the width of the creek himself," replied Dick.

"Phew!" whistled Hurlbut. "The bank he jumped from must have been higher than the one he jumped to."

"I can't say how that was. But Brady was a man of great strength of limb, and he was desperate," replied Dick.

"No man knows how much he can do until necessity forces him to make an effort," reflected one of the party.

"Now, Dick, you must rake up another yarn for us," said one of the party from the settlement.

"Yes; another story—do," said one of the rangers.

Dick had become considerably enlivened from imbibing the brandy, and he quickly overhauled his stock of stories and border knowledge, for something with which to entertain the company.

"Tell 'em about the massacre at Big Bottom, you know I gave you all I knew about it," said one of the company

CHAPTER X.**DICK TELLS ANOTHER STORY.**

THAT will do," replied Dick. "You see, men, in 1790, a company of thirty-six men began a settlement at Big Bottom, on this river, about thirty miles from its mouth."

"The company built a block-house of the largest size, on the left bank of the river, and made a small clearing around it. Many people had advised the settlers not to go out in the fall of 1770, as they knew the red men were hostile, and that most of the company were ignorant of border or military rules. But the settlers were impatient, and confident in their power to defend themselves. Their block-house was built to accommodate the whole party in case of attack. It was constructed of large beech logs rather open. The job of filling in between was left for some rainy day. No palisades were erected and no sentinels posted. Several of the company erected cabins a short distance from the block-house, and commenced clearing their land."

"The red men, who had been hunting in the vicinity of the settlements during the summer, knew all the approaches to them, and the unguarded manner in which the settlers lived. They planned an attack upon Waterford and sent out a war-party to execute it. This party

reached the high ground on the river opposite Big Bottom, on the afternoon of the the 2d of January. They saw the the defenceless state of the block-house, and how the men were occupied, and then determined to attack the settlement. Crossing the Muskingum on the ice a short distance above, they divided into parties, one of which was to assault the block-house, and the other to secure the men in a large cabin about twenty rods from it. The latter party cautiously approached the cabin, and found the men at supper. Some of the red men entered and spoke to the whites, who suspected no harm, and offered them something to eat. The intruders then took some leather thongs from their pockets, and made signs to the white men that they were prisoners. This astonished them, but they were compelled to submit to be bound.

"The other division of the Indians reached the block-house without being seen. A large, daring warrior then threw open the door and held it, while his comrades fired upon the white men around the fire. One man, who was frying meat, fell dead at the discharge; and the Indians then rushed in and killed all the rest with the tomahawk. The white men made no resistance; but Mrs. Meeks——"

"That was the wife of Ike Meeks, who hunted for the party," said one.

"Yes," said Dick. "Well, Mrs. Meeks seized an axe, and struck at the warrior who had opened the door. The blow went through the man's cheek into his shoulder, just grazing his skull. Mrs. Meeks was tomahawked before she could repeat the stroke.

"While this butchery was being performed, a young man named Stacey sprang up the ladder into the upper story, and then got on the roof, hoping to escape that way. But the red men, who were on the watch, shot him down. Before he fell, he cried out to the enemy to spare his life, and this alarmed two brothers named Ballard, who lived in a cabin near the block-house. They seized their rifles and took to the woods. The Indians soon after came to

their cabin, and saw that they had just fled, but did not pursue them.

"After the slaughter was over, the Indians proceeded to collect the plunder. In taking away some bedding, a lad named Stacey—a brother to the one who had been shot upon the roof of the block-house—was discovered. He threw himself at the feet of one of the leading warriors, and asked him to spare his life. The savage, satisfied with the work of death, saved him. After taking away everything they thought worth the trouble of conveyance, they tore up the floor, piled it over the dead bodies, and set it on fire. But the green beech would not burn, and the fire only destroyed the floors and roofs. The two Ballards escaped to Waterford, and alarmed the inhabitants, who, under the bold and skillful direction of Captain Rodgers, prepared for the attack. But the Indians, aware that the men who had escaped would alarm the settlers, considered the attempt useless, and set out, with their prisoners, for their homes."

The party then prepared to seek repose.

We will now return to Joe Barber, whom we left in the forest on his way towards the stronghold of the Seminoles.

When he found his wounded wife at his ruined home, he did not believe that she would possibly live, and his agony was great, although he did not exhibit that grief as some persons would have done. But when he was assured that she would recover, he felt emotions of joy he had never before experienced.

He knew that the Seminole chief had murdered his first wife and stolen his child. Of course, there was vengeance burning in his breast, and for some time he only lived for revenge. But he failed to find his enemy, and at length he recovered a child he believed to be his own. True, he had some doubts upon the subject, for he could not recognize the childish prattle he had once listened to; but gradually he settled into the belief that he had really found his lost darling.

Then he reflected that the gentle guardianship of a mother was of vast influence, and he found that mother.

And it was his love for his little one, and the kind being who became her protector, which caused him to forego further plans of vengeance. He wished to live in peace for their sakes. At the same time, he would occasionally reproach himself with cowardice—and so he lived on for years.

The savages were waging their warfare principally upon the western coast of Florida, and so he felt himself secure in his quiet home near Tampa Bay.

But now, all the bitterness he had ever experienced came back to him with renewed force; and as he advanced through the forest, his mind was made up upon two things. First, he must rescue his daughter, and then he must secure a future peace by removing the villainous Bowlegs from earth.

Scarcely an hour did he pause for rest in his journey; and just as the twilight of evening came on, the second day, he arrived at the lake, and in sight of the bluff where he knew the savages were quartered. To penetrate their stronghold, he believed, would be a very difficult matter; but he felt himself equal to the emergency.

Seating himself at a spot where he felt that he would not be likely to be discovered, he determined to rest for a short time, in order to recover all his energies, and to await darkness.

Presently, he was startled by a sound near him, like the parting of the canebrake; and turning, he saw an Indian slowly moving towards him with his tomahawk raised to strike.

But he had no idea of dying just yet, especially by the hands of a single foe.

Leaping forwards, he grappled with the savage, and a fierce struggle took place. It was brief, however, for Barber was the much more powerful of the two, and by a well-directed blow, he laid his enemy low, himself receiving but a slight wound.

This encounter really proved a fortunate circumstance for the hunter, for now he had a disguise in his possession which would be of the greatest service.

It was not long before he was decked in the Indian costume, and any one not closely examining his features would have taken him for a veritable savage.

By this time, darkness had fallen over the earth. The avenger took his way through the swamp, the intricacies of which he was quite well acquainted with, and at length reached the base of the bluff.

Slowly he began his ascent, working his way from point to point, occasionally pausing to listen. That something unusual was going on he felt convinced; and when he had arrived near the cabin of Bowlegs, he believed he well understood its meaning, for he heard the voice of Wild Cat assembling his warriors.

It was probable that the troops from the fort were advancing rapidly, and that the alarm had been given, so that the Indians were preparing for defense.

He listened for the voice of Bowlegs, but it was not heard.

Passing near the mouth of a cave, he heard footsteps, and stepping back under the shadow of the rock, he awaited their approach.

It was with a thrill of wild delight that he recognized the very persons for whom he was searching; and forgetting his Indian garb, he stepped forward to meet them.

This was the savage who had confronted Judson and the maidens as they were leaving the cave.

The young officer had taken the knife from the hands of Matteo, which she had brought for the purpose of severing his cords, and with it he leaped forward to meet his supposed enemy.

"Hold your hand, Judson!" exclaimed Barber, in a low tone.

The voice was a familiar one, and lowering his blade, the young man asked:

"Who are you?"

"An Indian now—a hunter, when I lived in my cabin, near Tampa Bay, before it was burned by Bowlegs."

"Barber?"

"That's my name."

She who had been known as his daughter, had recognized his voice, and leaping forward, she was clasped in his powerful arms.

For a moment, she had forgotten the story which had been related to her, and that she was not his child.

Clinging to him closely, she sobbed forth:

"Oh! my mother—you found her?"

"Yes; and alive."

"Alive! No; Bowlegs killed her."

"No; she was only wounded, and will recover."

"Thank God. Where is she now?"

"Safe at the fort."

"Oh! I am so rejoiced to hear it, father; but——"

"What would you say, my daughter?"

"I call you father, but you are not so. You call me daughter, while another has a claim to that title."

"Are you mad, Lilly?"

"No; my name is Blanche Judson, and here is my brother. Here also, is your long-lost Lilly. Take her in your arms—gaze into her face; listen to her voice, and see if you cannot trace some resemblance to her mother, murdered years ago by the one who captured us."

Matteo had advanced, and winding her arms around the hunter, she gazed up into his eyes, and in a voice full of emotion, said:

"I believe I am your child—I hope that I am, dear father."

Barber clasped his hands upon his brow as if suffering pain. He trembled violently, and then asked:

"What is the meaning of all this? Surely I recognize the voice of my first wife—she who bore me my only child, and in the dim light I think I can trace her features. But tell me—are you not little Matteo?"

"So I have been called."

"And we have met before. Why is it that until now, your voice and your features have not seemed to be familiar?"

"You never gave me any especial heed."

"True. But explain all this."

"Let us step further in the shadow of the cave, and I will do so."

This was done, and Matteo went on to repeat her story, just as Bowlegs had given it to her. The father listened with great emotion, and once or twice a sob escaped him.

Over and over again did he clasp his new-found daughter to his bosom, and the reunion was a happy one, even if it did take place in that dismal cavern, and surrounded by danger.

After a time the old hunter turned to Blanche and said:

"So your parents are still living?"

"Yes—so my brother tells me."

"And I must part with you—Polly must part with you. It will be hard, for we have both loved you, even as our own—we can never cease to love you, even as such."

"And that love will be fully returned, ever. But why should we be separated at all? Where my home is, cannot yourself, she who has always been a mother to me, and Matteo, dwell?"

"Yes—but——"

"What would you say?"

"We must think of escape now. Follow me as silently as possible. See—the daylight is actually appearing in the east."

Barber led the way, and down among the ledges, the party advanced. The passage was extremely difficult, especially for those unaccustomed to surmounting such obstacles.

Presently the old hunter paused, and turning to the maidens, he quickly drew them back into a dark niche, motioning Henry also to conceal himself. Then he whispered:

"Listen. I am sure I heard the voice of Bowlegs. Listen to that."

From beneath a ledge, some thirty feet below, there came back the voice of the chief. At first it was a kind of growl, and then his words were clearly distinguished. He said:

"Curses upon the palefaces—I believe they will be too much for me this time. They have mounted cannon on the backs of mules, and will soon be within range of this place. They will shell me out, and nothing will be left me but surrender. Perhaps they will kill me. Surrender? No, by heaven! I will not. Give up this glorious country? That I may be compelled to do, but never surrender in person, and place myself at the mercy of the paleface dogs. They would show me none—I will show none to them. I will go to the cave, kill that Judson, and then escape with my maiden captive."

Another savage had appeared upon the scene, and had heard the words of Bowlegs. He was standing within a few feet of the hunter and his friends, and yet they were not discovered.

This Indian hissed forth:

"Yes; I'll do it. It requires but a single stroke with my knife, and the deed is done. Then Wild Oat will be King of Florida.

Instantly did the savage sever three or four ropes near him. First came a kind of rumbling sound, and then a sudden and terrible crash. A mass of rock which had been held in its place—a trap prepared for the white man, went thundering down the chasm, to the very spot where Bowlegs was standing.

Wild Oat burst into a loud laugh, and exclaimed:

"Buried now, sure. Bowlegs will trouble me no more. Now I will bring back the maidens, and they shall be mine."

"No you won't!" returned Barber, as he planted his blade between the shoulders of the redskin, and sent him whirling over the ledge.

A wild cry came back. It was a death wall, and was recognized as such by the savages who were further up the steep, and heard it.

Answering shouts came back, and the hunter knew that no time was to be lost.

Down the declivity they hastened, while fierce yells rang out behind them, appearing to approach nearer each moment. The hunter and the officer might have escaped had they been alone, but the maidens were no match in fleetness for the savages.

The only hope was that the troops were near; and this hope was not vain, for presently the booming of a cannon rang out, echoing across the lake and up the ledges. Nor was this the only shot. Others followed in rapid succession, and the shouts of defiance rang out from the lips of Barber, while those of the savages died out, they taking refuge for safety high up the bluffs.

In a short time the party joined the troops, and were safe.

The bombardment was so severe that the savages were obliged to sue for peace, which was granted, on condition that they would leave the country and go to the Indian Territory, which condition they accepted.

Bowlegs was not killed, but so terribly injured that he lived a broken man, that life was a terrible burden.

There was considerable rejoicing at the fort when the troops returned, in company with those who had been captured, and all was explained.

Mrs. Barber recovered slowly, but surely.

Then there came another meeting. The parents of the young maiden who had been known as Lilly Barber received the happy intelligence that their daughter still lived, and they soon joined her at the fort. The meeting was an affecting and happy one.

Peace was now declared, and our friends were no more molested. Matteo became the wife of Henry Judson, and Blanche soon found some one to love and call her wife.

THE END.

